

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

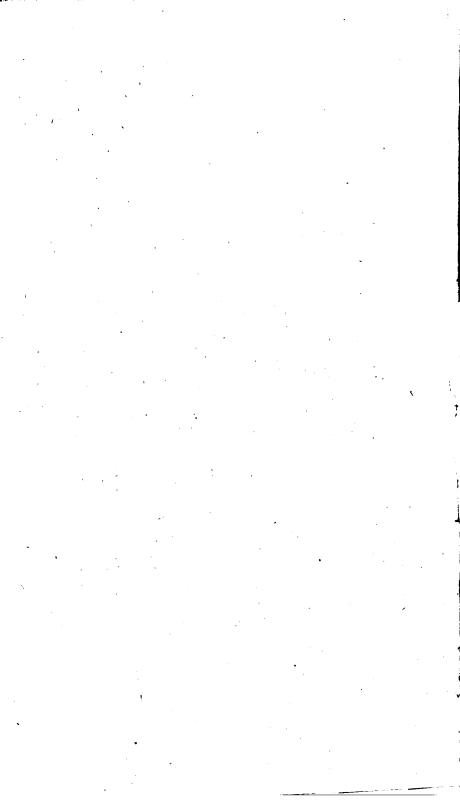
We also ask that you:

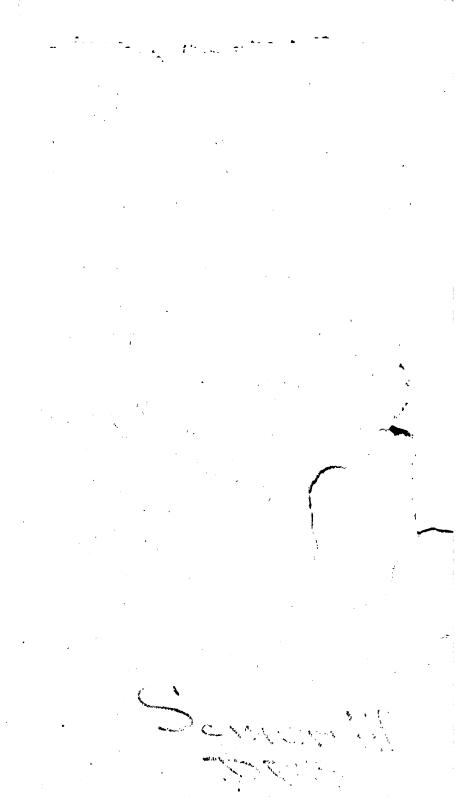
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + Keep it legal Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

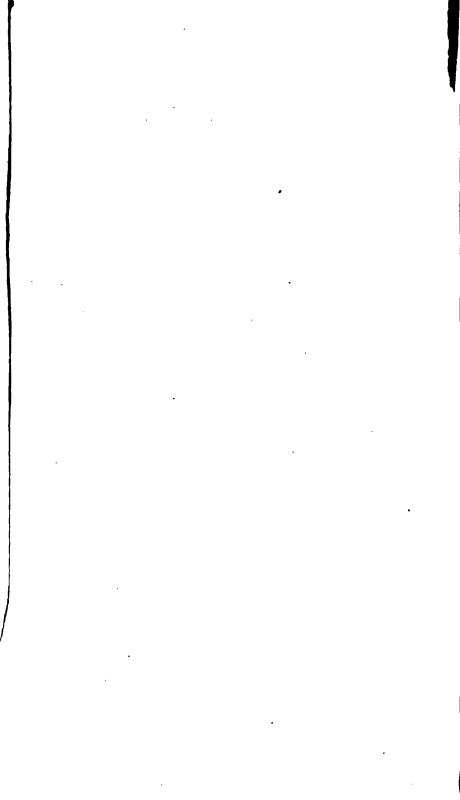




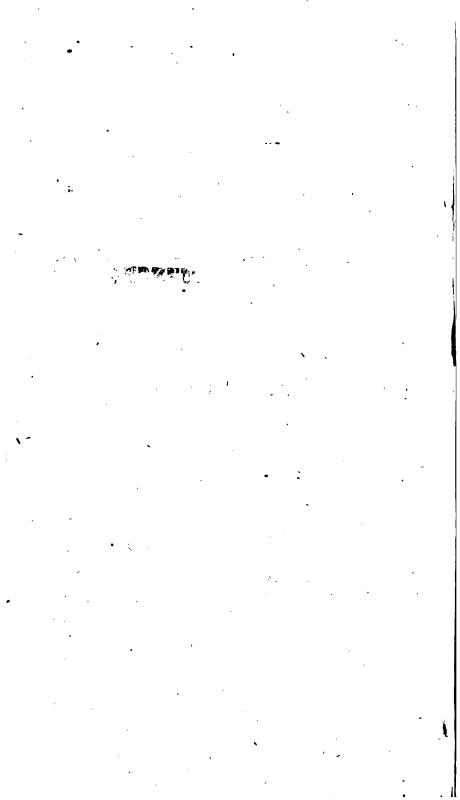




. . . -, . • · . . • · ·



lottik from paris





ON THE

Causes and consequences

OF THE

French Revolution.

BY WM. C. SOMERVILLE.

"Indeed the whole world may be said to be like a house full of smoke, which in such manner blinds the eyes, as it suffers not those within it, to see things as they are."-Jeremy Taylor's Contemplations.

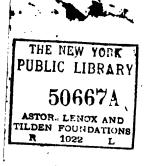
"To live by one man's will became the cause of all men's misery."-Hooker. "None can love freedom heartily but good men; the rest love not freedom but license, which never hath more scope or indulgence than under tyrants."

Mitton.

"Yet freedom-yet thy banner, torn, but flying Streams like a thunder storm against the wind."-Byren.

> Baltimore: PUBLISHED BY EDWARD J. COALE.

> > JOHN D. TOY, PRINTER. 1822.



BISTRICT OF MARYLAND, TO WIT:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-third day of April, in the forty-counth just of the lyingendance of the United States of Annaics, William C. Sconerville, of the and Disrice, have deposited in this office the tisk of a book, the right where f he daims at support, in the words following, to with

"Letters from Paris, on the causes and consequences of the Freech resolution. By William C. Somerrills..."Indeed the whole verife may be wide to be like a house full of massis, which, in such annuals black the spire, as it suffer not these within it, to see things as they are. Journy Taylor's Constraintsichem - "To live by one main's will, because the news of all mays induces, "Moot and less freiden heartily tail good may, thereas two to freiden but Heans," which more access or induces heartily and good may, the set of freiden will find and the strenge of all wind." Byros."

In sonformity with the fact of the Congress of the United States, entitied, "An Act for the descentagement of learning, by sonaring the copies of maps, charts, and heads, to the anthers and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein menicosi," and she is the fact, so withing. "As all Supplementary to the Act, enthick, an Act for the entering the times, therein menicosi," and the is the fact, so withing. "As all Supplementary to the Act, enthick, and Act for the entering the times, therein menicosi, and the state of the state of the transforming, mericanic, and excluse, index for the other of the state menicosi, and excluse, therein the time of the transforming, mericanic, and excluse, index forms, during the times. therein menicosi, and excluse the state of the transforming, mericanic, and excluse, index forms, other of the times."

> PHILIP MOORE, Clerk of the District of Maryland.

> > 1

Contents.

LETTER I.	page
On the Condition of France, from 1450, to the death of Louis. XIII. 1642,	69
LETTER II.	
On the Reign of Louis XIV. from 1642 to 1715,	87
LETTER III.	
On the Regency of Orleans, and the reign of Louis XV.	
1715 to 1774, '	100
LETTERS IV. V. VI.	
On the Reign of Louis XVI. from 1774 until the assembling	•
of the States General, 5th May, 1789, - 112, 121,	
LETTER VII.	`
On the Conduct of the National or Constituent Assembly,	•
1789 and 1790,	141
EETTER VIII.	
On the Conduct of the Legislative Assembly in 1791 and	
1792.	
	155
LETTER IX.	•
On the National Convention-the Reign of Terror-the Reign	
of Anarchy—the Republic and First Directory—Character	
of American Sand 1800 to 1808	172
LETTER X.	
On the Second Directory, and the Consular Government-	
Character of Bonaparte, 1797 to 1804,	185

. د

Contraction of the second second

CONTENTS.

LETTER XI.

On the Imperial Government. 195 LETTER XII. On the Fall of Napoleon and the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1814. The Charter. Errors of the Royal Government, 209 LETTER XIII. On the Character of Louis XVIII.'s Ministry. Congress of Vienna, Return of Napoleon, 222 LETTER XIV. On the Character of the New Imperial Government of the hundred days-Battle of Waterloo, and second Abdication of the Emperor, • 838 LETTER XV. On the second Invasion of France-conduct of Allies-severity of the New Government, from the second Restoration in July, 1815, until the 5th of Sept. 1816, 257 LETTER XVI. On the first Law of Elections, and Law of Recruitment; Character of Richelieu's Administration in 1817 and 1818-Congress of Aix la Chapelle-dissolution of the Ministry, and fall of the Duc de Richelieu, 271 LETTER XVII.

LETTER XVIII.

On the Prosperous Condition of France at the close of 1810unfortunate election and expulsion of Gregoire-division of the Cabinet-Decazes' new Ministry-Death of the Buc de Berri-Fall of Decazes-Restoration of Richelieu-Relapse of the Government into arbitrary measures, - 297

LETTER XIX.

On the Prerogatives of the Crown—Abolition of the Liberty of the Press and of Personal Liberty—Change in the Law of Election—partial union of Richelieu with the Ultras, \$16

vi –

4

CONTENTS.

LETTER XX.

LETTER XXI.

On the Municipal System of France-Reads, Canals, &c.-Progress of Agriculture since 1789, and Agricultural Produce of the Kingdom-Scotch Husbandry, and the Drill System of Mr. Coke in England, - - - - 548

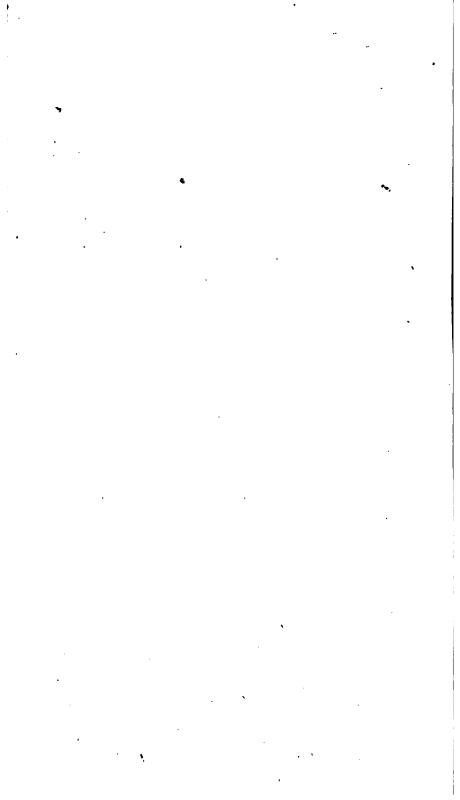
LETTER XXII.

On the Progress of Manufactures since 1789—Exhibition of the Products of French Industry in the Louvre in 1819. Comparison of the Manufactures of France and England, \$72

INTRODUCTORY LETTER, OR RÉSUMÉ.

On the Effects or Advantages of the Revolution on the Morals, Religion, and Internal Condition of France-Errors of the first Revolutionists-Monarchical Predilections of the French-Imperial Regime-Royal Regime-Charter and Contravening Laws-Effects of the Revolution on Education, Literature, and Science. Consequences of the English Revolution. Remarks on the present state of Europe-Contest between the People and their Governors -Progress of Civilization, and probable establishment of a Free Government in France-Conclusion, .

₩i



PREFACE.

AMBRICANS have been so much in the habit of confining their regards to Great Britain, or of looking at the continent of Europe through British publications, as almost to justify the reproachful sarcasm, "that England is the Europe of America." The following Letters are submitted to the public, in the hope, that whatever may be their imperfections, they may contribute, in some slight degree, to remove that imputation. They were written in Paris in the spring of 1820, after a residence of some months in that capital. Their object was to embody an American's views of the actual meral and political condition of the French people; to point out the causes which have led to that condition; and to suggest the consequences that are likely to flow from it. If the observations they contain are founded in truth, they must be gratifying to all those who feel a lively interest in the fortunes of mankind; and if they are bottomed on error, they can do but little harm, since the press is constantly teeming with much abler essays on the other side of the question." Independent indeed of a want of ability in the author, they were hastily thrown together in a city in which every thing was new to him, and of course attractive; in which the mind of a stranger is so perpetually diverted from all serious reflection, either by the unusual splendour of a military parade, or a religious procession-by the brilliant gaities of society, or the fascinating

-

allurements of the opera and theatres, that it is almost impossible for it to feel a profound and exclusive interest in any one subject. It was, in fact, as an occasional refuge from the enchanting dissipations that embellish existence in Paris, and as an excitement to procure information, that the writer was indused to continue those letters, which he had begun in consequence of some severe strictures on the hereditary instability of the French character, that he heard a distinguished traveller let fall in Italy, in 1819. As they were not originally intended for publication, there was but little care taken to note down authorities for facts or opinions; and hence, in some instances, ideas may have been borrowed without the possibility of recollecting, at this distance of time, the source whence they were derived .---An attempt, however, has been made to correct this omission, by pointing out authorities, and the writer hopes with sufficient success to relieve him from the imputation of warping circumstances into conformity with his private opinions, or of colouring them after the complexion of his own prejudices.

In sketching the historical portrait of France since the revival of learning, an attempt has been made to avoid any minuteness of delineation that might not contribute to a just comprehension of the picture. If therefore, those who are well acquainted with history, should find some traits which it might have been unnecessary to fill up for them; or if the more careless contemplator of human affairs should not, from the contraction of the features, comprehend their relative connexion, it is hoped that each will recollect that those Letters were not addressed by an author to the world, but by a young gentleman, (a mere Tyro in the Republic of Letters) to a friend of philosophical taste; and that their object was to prove, by induction, that the condition of the world is so rapidly improving that there is no reason to despair of the future from the gloom of the past.

The ancient regime of France presented the most perfect model of absolute government ever known in Europe, and yet there is not one, the contemplation of whose history tends more to heighten and confirm an attachment to liberty, inasmuch as it proves, that there exists an inseparable connexion between oppression, vice, and ignorance on the one hand, and between freedom, intelligence, and virtue on the other.

It is a source of regret to the writer of these letters, that their perusal is calculated to give a less favourable impression of the French character than he actually entertains. This defect was, in some degree, inseparable from an inquiry which may be considered rather as an Exposé of the causes of the few defects of the French character, than of the sources of its more numerous virtues. It was not so much his object to trace the causes by which France was raised to the proud eminence she has long held among nations, as to point out the clogs and weights which retarded, and some of which still continue to impede, the course of her ascendancy. The liberal censure, therefore, of the lives and manners of those who perverted the morals of that brilliant people, should not be confounded, even in imagination, with the censure of the nation itself. Princes and men in power find persons enough ready to praise their scanty virtues, and to exalt their discharge of the simplest duties into acts of miraculous goodness. If their vices and follies were set in equal relief. mankind might be soon cured of their inordinate admiration of royalty.

In delineating the characters of the two parties which divide Europe at present, these letters evidently lean in favour of that which desires the acquisition of rational liberty, and whose doctrines the writer believes to be favourable to human prosperity, and of course in unison with the will of the all-wise and beneficent Creator of the Universe. He may therefore be thought, by those who confound the present liberal party in France with the old Jacobins, to have represented their views and sentiments in too favourable a light. The same opinion, however, would have been entertained by a similar class of politicians, of an equally fair representation of the principles of the Whigs in England, if published before the Revolution of 1688. Yet the writer is willing to admit, that in a nation so lately rent asunder by the collisions of civil war as the French, and in which, as in the ocean after the violence of a storm hath subsided, an agitation still continues, it is very difficult indeed, for the mind of even a foreigner, so to steady and compose itself, as to judge dispassionately of the influence of past, or of the tendency of passing events. Amid so many discordant factions as exist in France.

an observer, in order to see well, should be armed like Perseus with the helmet of Pluto and the buckler of Minerva.

That the Revolution, in spite of its horrors and its follies has been of immense advantage to France, and is now producing the happiest effects on the public mind of Europe, are facts which are beginning to be very generally suspected even by those who are not at all inclined to believe them. Yet it is somewhat singular that although the great potentates of Europé have combined in a "Holy Alliance," to shut out from the nations they govern the lights of liberty and truth; that although the press has been put in requisition to calumniate and to slay the spirit of innovation; that although the censors of the journals in France have lost no opportunity of bringing the representative system of government into disrepute by caricature representations of some disorderly scenes got up in the Chamber of Deputies by the enemies of the freedom of debate, and which reports have been carefully copied into foreign journals to throw discredit or derision on the French nation; that although every effort has been made, even in that glorious Island in which modern liberty was born, to bring the old Jacobite spirit of allegiance into vogue-there has scarcely been a single publication in the English language to show the progress France is making in civilization under even her present imperfect system of government; or to vindicate the principles of the liberal party against the calumnies of such politicians as those "qui en France s'informe, pour inviter quelq'un a diner, s'il est en faveur aupres des ministres."*

The recent change of ministry, which has brought the ultra royalists into power, has, it is true, been regarded by many as a convincing evidence that the spirit of freedom is retrograding in France. It must be admitted, to be sure, that even the temporary triumph of the enemies of civil liberty is a national calamity in any country; but on the present occasion in France it is an unequivocal symptom of the progress of an independent spirit. The neutral party which supported the ministries of Richelieu and of Decazes had scarcely more than an imaginary existence in the body of the nation itself. It was created by the influence of the government, and the spirit of subserviency. If the free-

" De Stael.

dom of election had not been nearly destroyed by the law of 1820, the ficticiousness of that party would have been proved by the triumph of the liberal or national party, which it was sufficiently evident would have happened after the election of the third fifth of the deputies under the law of 1817. To prevent this the government racked its brain to discover a mode of election in which the voice of the nation should be virtually, though not seemingly suppressed. They placed the choice of deputies in the hands of the Aristocrats to keep it out of those of the Public, and thus after the election of the one hundred and seventytwo new members, and the removal of the second fifth of the Chamber under the new law, the consumptive fraction of the Chamber of 1819-20, called the "Coté droit," or Ultras, became the majority, and have converted the government into a a sort of oligarchy. This is a forced and unnatural state of things which cannot last very long; but whether it will be destroyed by a great revolutionary convulsion, or by the soberer influence of public opinion, it might be difficult to conjecture. As M. Villele, the present actual prime minister, is a man of fair character and large abilities, a hope may be indulged that he will not run into any excess, nor attempt any violent opposition to the tide of public opinion. In the mean time the nation is advancing in political experience; the politicians of the old school are gradually dropping off; and the neighbouring nations are making an auxiliary progress in the knowledge of representative government; so that when the change comes, (and come it must) it will probably be more in harmony with other existencies, and be accomplished with greater ease and felicity.

There is no probability that the Liberals will be discouraged, since they know that the nation is with them, and feel the justice of the remark of Sallust, "Pulchrum est bene facere reipublicæ." Their doctrines are unfashionable at court and they must necessarily continue to be so. There are no truths which are not offensive to some people. The Grecians persecuted Anaxagoras for asserting that the sun was larger than Peloponnesus; and the Italians Gallileo, for believing that the earth revolved around the sun. Yet time has rectified the judgments of men, and these facts are now as universally admitted as the simplest axioms of philosophy. Political and moral truths are necessarily slower in their progress than physical ones, because they not only shock the prejudices, but often the interest of the most influential class of society. If then, persons were once found so wedded to the Aristotelian theories of philosophy as to refuse, after the invention of the Telescope, to look through that instrument lest it might reveal to them the absurdities of their faith, is there any reason to be surprised that there should now exist in the world a class of valetudinary politicians, who reject, with impatient incredulity, any evidence, no matter how strong, of the advantages which the old nations of Europe are destined to derive from revolution? Nor would it be necessary if the fountain of the Clarion Apollo, existed in these modern times, to drink of its waters of inspiration in order to foretel those advantages; they have been admirably developed in England, and are now very powerfully exhibited in France, where the clouds of political darkness are beginning to break up; where

> "The weary sun hath made a golden set, And by the bright track of his fiery car, Gives token of a goodly day to-morrow."

Baltimore, 1822.

LETTER I.

Paris, Feb. 1st, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

I am very sensible of your kindness in requesting to know what changes of opinion on the causes and consequences of the French revolution, my short residence in this country may have occasioned As my present impressions, however, are the results of some observation and research, I must claim your permission in delivering them, to run over the train of reflection which produced them. You are aware that I came to France with an opinion very prevalent in foreign countries, that the French were demoralized by the revolution, and scarcely fit for a better constitution of government than the military despotism. of Napoleon. Even the dreadful energy, or enthusiasm for glory which they displayed under his dominion, and which was in a great degree a momentum derived from the impulse of the revolution, I was inclined to consider a proof of the suitableness of that government only to their national character. But after a very diligent examination of their past history and of their actual condition, I must confess, I am not only at a loss to point out any period in which the complexion of the public and private morals of France was fairer than at present, but even one in which there existed half so many happy and unequivocal indications of improvement. Although it may be impossible therefore to study her history without having one's entertainment occasionally dashed with sadness, there is something delightfully consoling in the contemplation of the prospect which more propitious circumstances are opening before her.

Two sets of men have exerted their talents with unrelenting zeal to misrepresent the effects of the revolution on the French character, and in doing so have concurred, from opposite motives, in attributing those crimes which sullied it, and which

were the natural offspring of despotism, to the spirit of liberty. The first class may be said to have been actuated by principle and the second by interest. The one deprecated the revolution from an impression that the old system of Europe not only offered the most beautiful "and august spectacle ever presented to the moral eye in the long series of ages that have furnished the matter of history;" but that all classes of society had acquired under that system the highest attainable degree of moral and intellectual improvement. The other dreaded the revolution because it sapped the foundations of their peculiar privileges and threatened to deprive all those, who had greater reason to boast of their birth than of their merit, of the exclusive enjoyment of hereditary wealth and honours. When the first signal of political reform appeared in France, these two classes contained most of the rank or fashion, and much of the talent of Europe. Accordingly an outcry of ominous prediction broke out almost simultaneously in every country; passionate resentments were kindled by inflammatory accusations; all arts were essayed to defeat the plans of the reformers, and a dreadful scene of confusion ensued, which seemed for a time to verify the apprehensions of the Aristocrats. But of late, great political events have unfolded themselves in such rapid succession, and the temper of contemplating them has been so much sobered down by the general peace, that a feeling of hesitation and of doubt, as to the correctness of the anti-revolutionary theories, has begun to manifest itself very generally on the continent. The revolutionary flame too, which was supposed to have been extinguished at the restoration in France, has since broken out in the neighbouring countries, and continues every where to smoke and sparkle so vigourously under the rubbish that covers it, as to justify the belief that it will in the course of the present century consume the whole fabric of arbitrary power in this quarter of the world. In order to form a rational conjecture of the probable consequences of this change on the system and state of Europe, it is necessary to run back a little into past ages, and to examine in regular sequence the political chain of causes and effects which have influenced the moral coadition of mankind, since the discovery of the art of printing. I shall therefore endeavour in the course of these letters, first to ascer- \vee tain the origin of the spirit of political reform in France, and to

abow how it advanced commensurately with the genius of civilization; and afterwards to ascertain the effects which the revolution it occasioned has produced on the French nation, so as to determine with tolerable precision what will result from similar changes in other countries.

The History of France, prior to the commencement of the sixteenth century, exhibits only a spectacle of barbarism alternately venting itself in acts of vexatious cruelty at home, and of sanguinary tyranny abroad. It offers but few recollections on which the heart can repose with complacency, or the mind meditate for instruction. The history of a people plunged in ignorance; the dupes of priests, and the slaves of nobles; of a government degenerating into despotism, and a religion sliding into superstition, presents pretty much the same sort of character in all In the long catalogue of the earlier kings of. France, countries. how many bad hearts and depraved understandings-how many acts of injustice, rapine and cruelty start up in our memories, at the names of Charles, and Louis, and Philip. Prior, indeed, to the sixteenth century, the spirit of chivalry may have shed the first dawnings of civilization on the higher classes of society; but the great body of the people were essentially what Cæsar represents them to have been before the Christian era, a nation of fierce and cunning barbarians; faithless, full of vivacity, and easily elated by success; but equally incapable of magnanimity in triumph, and of fortitude in misfortune. In speaking of the French in the middle ages, M. De Voltaire observes, that "on remarquera seulement que la nation française etait plongée dans l'ignorance sans excepter qui croient n'etre point peuple."

About the middle of the fifteenth century, almost at the same moment that the Eastern Empire expired under the sword of Mahomet 2d, and the art of printing was discovered in Germany, the English were expelled from France, and the monarchy restored to its ancient beauty. The consolidation of Spain by the junction of Castile and Arragon, and of England, by the union of the two roses, together with the discovery of America, followed soon after; so that an important revolution took place almost simultaneously in all the great states of Europe, and prepared the way for that progressive amelioration of morals and manners which constitutes the peculiar glory of modern times.

•••

Charles VII. under whom France achieved her independence, was rather the spectator than the creator of the wonders of his reign, and owed more perhaps to the imbecile inertness of his rival, Henry VI. than to the inspirations of his own genius. The jealous, fiery, and imperious temper, and the profound dissimulation of his son and successor Louis XI. did so much to weaken the insurgent ability of the nobles, that although he left them rather confounded than subdued, he may be said to have laid the solid foundations of the French monarchy. His son, Charles VIII. whose reign closed the fifteenth century, secured still further the internal tranquillity of the kingdom by the acquisition of Brittany to the crown, but wasted its resources by a wild chivalrous expedition into Italy. As the links in the chain of causes, which have combined to produce the modern French character, become visible only during these reigns, I cannot pass over in silence a circumstance which, whilst it points out the furious tyranny that had previously prevailed, may aid the judgment in forming an idea of the social relations of this people in that age. I allude to the very touching picture of national distress presented to Charles VIII. by the states general assembled at Tours. They stated that the people were so oppressed by military and civil officers, as to be obliged to fly from their ruined houses, and subsist in the forests-that they were so impoverished by the seizure of their cattle and property, as to be forced to attach their wives or children to their ploughs-that some were obliged to work by night, and conceal themselves in the day, in order to avoid being seized and thrown into dungeons, and that others, reduced to the last extremity of despair, had been known to murder their families, and abscond into foreign countries for nourishment!

Charles unquestionably did something to abate the severity of these distresses; but it was the milder and more beneficent administration of Louis XII. that principally softened the rigour of regal tyranny in France, and exercised such a sweetening influence on her morals, as made her at his death the most beautiful inheritance in Europe. Good and valiant princes are so rare, that it is always painful to point out their errors, if these proceed from the folly of the head, or the corruption of the heart; but it can scarcely tarnish the glory of the short and illustrious

reign of Louis XII. to observe, that in common with the princes of that age, he suffered himself to be misled by a phantom of ambition. The brilliant but unfortunate career of his predecessor, together with his pretensions on the Duchy of Milan, through his grandmother Visconti, and a prospect of the crown of Naples, allured him into Italy, where after marching unprofitably over the country, with victory in his van, and disaster in his rear; after wasting the treasures of his kingdom, and the blood of much of his brave nobility, he committed (without securing the affections of the Italians,) the capital error of ruining the weak, and augmenting the power of the strong, so that, like many other conquerors, he ended pretty nearly where he began. The great folly of kings has ever been, the belief that the true art of government consists in enlarging the extent of their dominions, and not as it really does in the invigoration and embellishment of those they already possess. Few princes have patience and generosity enough to labour for posterity. The visions of vanity, and the schemes of self love, are for the most part the directors of their policy; and therefore they act like tenants on short leases, who force their lands to the utmost, and provided they can gather a tolerable crop themselves, feel no regret for the ruin of the land, nor anxiety for the fortunes of those who are to follow them.

It is one of the principal inconveniences of the monarchical form of government, that it not only renders the moral character of a nation dependent in a great degree on the personal character of the sovereign, but exposes the sovereign more than any other individual in his dominions to corruption, from the circumstance of his being born to power, and of course surrounded with parasites from his infancy. It is perhaps owing to this cause that the greatest and best kings of France have been those who were not born with a certain prospect of wearing the crown, but came into possession of it by accident, after having learned wisdom in the school of adversity. Louis XII., Francis I., Henry IV .. and Louis XVIII., might be cited as examples in support of this suggestion. Francis I. it is true, had his reason staggered by a too sudden dash of prosperity, and his morals injured by the too early enjoyment of regal power; yet he was a prince of distinguished talents, and his reign, which lasted from 1515 to near

the middle of the sixteenth century, had a great influence in forming the French character. Perhaps, however, the indiscretions and the adventurous knight-errantry of Francis, were fortunate for mankind, since the destinies of Europe probably hung at one time on his religious caprice. The encroachments and practices of the papal see had excited considerable discontent in France at the time that Luther unveiled the sun of reformation: so that if Francis, whilst its rays were spreading over Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, and England, had nursed the resourses of his kingdom, and embraced with moderation the side of the Huguenots, he must have become the head of the Protestant league, and in the end of his reign, the most powerful potentate in Europe. 'A kingdom so extensive and centrally situated as France, invigorated and enriched as it must have been by a few years of peace, would have become, in alliance with Protestant Germany and England, an over-match for the Empire and Spain, so that Francis, instead of wasting his energies in the victories of Marignan and Cerisoles, or losing every thing "except honor" on the fields of Bicoque and Pavia, might have not only acquired the ascendency in Europe, but have drawn a sword, which, in the hands of one of his successors, might have cut the gordian knot of universal conquest. But this prince was born with a temperament too sanguine to perceive the obstacles that might impede the course of his own hot ambition, and he therefore plunged presumptuously into a sea of experiment, and after a variety of heroical adventures, ended his voyage less happily than he began it. The fondness of Francis for martial and courtly gallantry, fascinated the regards, and embellished the character of the French nation; but the best fruits of a wise administration ripen in after times, and although it may not be fair to put "all upon the king," it is just to lay something to his charge.

 \checkmark Under Francis I. the effects of the art of printing began to be very sensibly felt; a thirst for learning made its appearance, and a taste for the fine arts began to quicken and expand itself. The observations of that monarch in Italy had enlarged in his mind the views of liberal curiosity, and led him to invite to his court some of the most respectable artists that flourished at that time under the Italian republics. But the age was essentially barbarous, and history furnishes us with ample proof, that when the heats of religious controversy broke out, a spirit of ferocity prevailed in the French nation, that led (in contempt of justice, and the dictates of moral sentiment,) to the most monstrous inhumanities. The numberless victims that were consigned for their speculative opinions to the rack and the flames; the desolation of the Vaudois, and the massacre of its entire population; the tearing to pieces of Jean le Clerc with red hot pincers, for having spoken against images and relics, and a variety of other atrocities, justify the observation of Voltaire, that when the bishops and the parliament lighted funeral piles, the king did not extinguish them, because his heart was as much hardened to the misfortunes of others, as it was softened by his own pleasures. These assassinations were the commencement of that cloud of persecution which hung over France during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and rendered it one of the most dismal periods in the history of man; "a period, the contemplation whereof," says John de Serre, a contemporary author, "makes my hair to stand upright, and my heart to tremble."*

Henry II. did the Huguenots too much injury not to fear them; and from the moment he feared, he wished to exterminate them. The parliament, however, remembered that the first martyrs of christianity had made converts by blessing the hands of their executioners, and it was therefore disposed to toleration; but the atrocious house of Guise had then become so powerful, that by intimidating the weak minded, bribing the corrupt, and inflaming the passions of the resentful, they not only succeeded in dispelling from that body the sweet spirit of mercy and conciliation which had begun to prevail in it, but in substituting in its place a sourcess of temper, and a spirit of vindictive persecution, which not even the virtues of an Hopital could afterwards extinguish or abate. Under the influence of this passion. the voice of all France became attuned to threnes of sadness, or to the tumultuous and cannibal cry of ferocious joy. The morals of an amiable, though half barbarous people, soon became sa brutalized by executions and massacres, that if it were not for the light which a few such shooting stars as Hopital and

History of France, p. 697, fol. ed. London, 1611.

Coligny shed on that gloomy age, we might imagine that for a period of twenty or thirty years, a night of universal ignominy had shut in on this bright realm of France, and that a rain of divine vengeance deluged it.

During the domination of Catharine of Medicis, and the house of Guise, under the reigns of Henry II., Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., which nearly closed the sixteenth century, the French historians assert, that religion became a mere sanguinary worship, whilst wealth and honours were lavished only on those who were accomplished in the obliquities of perfidy;---that the fine arts falling into neglect, lost the charm which for a time they had acquired over the minds of the nobles, and that literature, suffocated by oppression, enriched the language with nothing but "the expressions of malice and revenge."* The martial sternness of chivalry, which was manly, if not humane, gave way to a finical hypocrisy, so that from that day the consciences of French courtiers became jocund under the pressure of vice, and gay in the midst of crime. Under Charles, the nobility took lessons in the exercise of the dagger, and the practice of an empoisoner or a hireling assassin, was so respectable that the place of their abode was a matter of public notoriety. Nor can posterity easily forget that it was under the government of Catharine of Medicis, that the amiable and beautiful Queen of Scots, just then in the bloom of youth and adolescence, was conducted with the court into a balcony at Amboise to enjoy the luxury of public executions; nay, to be derided with laughter, because, unfamiliarized with blood, she could not behold a spectacle of horror without affliction. form an idea of the morals of the court, (says Millot, † who wrote under Louis XV.) it is only necessary to conceive all sorts of vice carried to the greatest possible excess; superstition, atheism, debauchery, hypocrisy, cruelty, poisoning, and assassination, were the praiseworthy accomplishments of the day. Every one acted in such seeming ignorance of the principles of right and wrong, and such contempt of justice, that private morals became as atrocious as they were depraved. The whim of a priest might exalt into virtue acts which the christian revelation had

History des Guerres civiles, 2 vol. p. 394.

† History of France.

denounced as crimes; and the caprice of a mistress justify the murder of a friend!

Although the seeds of moral principle which these bad times sowed, were never fairly eradicated out of France, I would not tire your patience by recalling your attention to the dismal events* of a period in which, "on parlait d'une contagion, d'une famine comme en d'autres temps on aurait parlé d'un accident leger," if there was not a striking coincidence between them and the principal atrocities of the late revolution. It was at the close of the 16th century, that the good people of Paris benevolently murdered, for the safety of his soul, any person who, in passing through the streets, omitted a reverence to the innumerable crosses, and images of saints and madonnas, or who might even refuse a contribution to replenish the lamps which burnt before them; at the close of the 18th the populace of Paris massacred every one they suspected of entertaining respect for such images. It was then that Charles IX. could offer up in a single day one hundred thousand human sacrifices, on what his hellish imagination conceived to be the altar of the Lamb of God; it was now that Robespierre would immolate an equal number of victims, in what his soul of malignity fancied to be the temple of liberty and peace. The devastation of the peaceful dwellings of the Vaudois, in the vallies of Provence and Dauphiny, by D'Oppéde, was the model of the La Vendée war-the drownings in the Loire were conducted on nearly the same plan by the Guises, as the revolutionary marriages of Nantes by Carrier-the inscription over the door of Joseph Le Bon's tribunal at Arras, that whoever came to plead for those confined on "a suspicion of being suspected, should be led to the little window," (the guillotine,) was copied nearly after that of Cardinal Lorraine at Fontainbleau, when he erected a gallows, and proclaimed by trumpet, that all who came to solicit mercy

* The butcheries in Bordcaux, Guienne, L'Angoumois, La Marche, and St. Onge, by Montmorenci, nuder Henri II.; the drownings in the Loire, and the hangings at Amboise until the air was infected, by Car. Lorraine under Francis II. the flagellations and hangings by Montlue and Guise under Catharine of Medicis, and that climax of human villany, the night of St. Barthelemy under Charles IX.

"Nous avons vu," says Volaire, 'les ju ges d'Angleterre sous Henri VIII. et sous Marie exercer des cruautés qui font horreur; les Français qui passent pour un peuple plus doux surpasserent beaucoup ces barbaries faites au nom de la religion et de la justice." Vol xviii. p. 228.

11

of the king for the suspected, should be hanged on the spot. Thus I think we may conclude, that the Ultra-Monarchist and the Ultra-Jacobin are pretty much the same sort of animal in France, and that they transfer, with equal alacrity and a zeal equally enlightened, the republican to the scaffold and the royalist to the guillotine.

The wounds which the several branches of the Guise family inflicted on France may have been healed by time, but the stain of moral turpitude that they imprinted has been very lasting. For a state, in the infancy of its greatness, in which civilization was struggling through the incrustations of prejudice, to fall into such hands, was an unspeakable calamity; and how so sensible a man as Mably, after reviewing the infamous conspiracies they hatched, and the butcheries they executed; after observing that the government would have ceased to have been despotic if the base ambition of the Duc de Guise had not prevented the grant of the demand of the States General of Blois, under Henry III .- after even asserting that if the Guises had existed under Louis XIII. the horrors of the league would have been acted over again; how, after all this, he could let slip the following palliation of their crimes, I cannot imagine. "Retranchez les Guises de notre histoire et vous n'y verrez ni moins de desordres, ni moins de 4 guerres civiles."

From these disgusting recollections of depravity and vice, over which the imagination grows weary and the heart sickens, we may turn with pleasure to the opening of the seventeenth century.-It was then that the sceptre of France fell by accident to a young hero, replete with the charms of humanity and justice, whose short but eventful life was a continual struggle against the fanaticism, cuffidity and thirst of blood, which the most wicked of all governments had transfused into the French character. There is indeed something so recreating in the prospect of Henry IV. devoting his gallant life in the field in the cause of justice or toleration; giving his hours to the study of plans for the . improvement of his people, and his leisure moments to the elegant fascinations of gallantry, that I often find myself ready to join this grateful people in the excess of enthusiasm with which they recal and applaud his virtues. And why should they not? They who have so little that is purely what it should be in their history, is it no proof of their goodly nature to dwell with elation and vanity on its most delightful era? The sweetness of Henry's administration touched the hearts of his subjects, whilst the parental solicitude and vigour with which he watched over the state, and converted the angry spirit of faction into the zeal of allegiance, excited the admiration of foreigners. The tendency of the kingdom to fall asunder again into baronial fiefs (arising from the independent operations of the nobles during the civil wars,) being now no longer augmented by the dangerous ambition of the house of Guise, went on diminishing every day, till the presumptuous conspiracy of Marshal Biron led to that spilling of his blood, which cemented the whole kingdom into one compact body.

To Henry IV. France owes all her greatness; and if her fanat.. icism had suffered him to live, and to follow the dictates of Sully's understanding, he might have effected the entire reform of her moral character. But the ignorance of the age caused the titles of liberator and restorer of France, of which he was so ambitious, to be misunderstood; and it was left for time to develop, and for succeeding ages to admire the greatness of his plans.

Henry found the finances of France in so deplorable a state, that of one hundred and fifty millions of livres paid by the people. twenty-five millions only reached the royal treasury. He reformed these abuses, and to ease the burthens of the nation, suppressed, as fast as the prejudices of the public would permit him, those brevetted titles of nobility, or tickets of exemption from taxation, and those sinecures which the venal folly of his predecessors had incorporated into the administration of the government. He introduced that order, regularity, and discipline into the army, which afterwards secured such brilliant triumphs to the French arms under Turenne and Condè. The encouragement he gave to industry, combined with the activity of his po. lice, nearly destroyed the numerous bands of roving brigands that had hitherto interrupted the intercourse between the provinces and plundered travellers on the highways with a sort of licensed impunity. The effect of his solicitude for the encouragement of agriculture was so great, that the price of land was doubled and the number of cattle quadrupled in France in fifteen years: whilst

. • .

the country, which he had found in a state of beggarly starvation, was not only abundantly relieved, but became a granary for foreign exportation. Many parts of France, when he came to the throne, lay waste for the want of roads and canals, but he and his great minister were so sensible of the utility of these engines of civilization, that even at the fall of the monarchy, after the lapse of near two centuries, there scarcely existed any thing of the kind in France which was not either commenced or planned by them. The Seine and the Loire were united, and the canal of Languedoc, the great good work of Louis XIV. proposed; whilst various roads wound themselves in every direction over the face of the country. Nor were his roads like those of his successors, mere highways of ostentation, in the enormous width of which there is land enough uselessly condemned to support the labourers necessary to keep them in repair. He erected new palaces, and embellished those which already existed; raised up colleges for the education of youth, and built hospitals to shelter those who had gallantly defended their country, or who were sinking into the infirmities of decrepitude. The Duke of Sully, in fact, was the first statesman who laid hold on the clue, which being followed up by later philosophers, has led to the centre of the abstruse labyrinth of political economy; and revealed the beautiful simplicity of a system, whose entanglements were formerly imagined to be too intricate for comprehension. It was the policy of that great minister to liberalize the public mind, and with this view he established libraries, universities, museums, and botanical gardens, so that before the end of his administration, the genius of civilization arose in France, and "o'er the dark scene her silver mantle threw." In short. almost all the great works of utility or embellishment which were executed in this kingdom in the seventeenth century were the offspring of his genius, although the pompous parade with which many of them were carried into effect by Louis XIV. occasioned a temporary forgetfulness of their origin, and robbed their author like Columbus, for a time, of his true reputation.

But however much we may be disposed to admire the plans of Henry and Sully for the improvement and decoration of France, they all yield in sublimity to the noble war they waged against the prevailing vices of the age—to that pure benevolence

and spirit of enlightened toleration with which they attempted to subdue the angry factious spirit which fifty years of trouble and fanaticism had irritated and matured. It is somewhat remarkable that civil wars in the nations of modern Europe have, in spite of the immediate injury they inflicted, been almost invariably the causes of much improvement in the end. Thus when the religious wars were over in France, and when the energy they awakened had been directed a few years by a wise government, nothing prevented France from acquiring an entire ascendancy in Europe but the death of Henry The re-organization of a government after its dissolution usually places it more in harmony with the spirit of the age; and in France the very opposite doctrines which were then preached with great vehemence smoothed in the end the asperities of prejudice. Had the Ligue accomplished its purpose the power of France might have been at this day on a level with that of Italy or Spain, for at that time the Spanish monarchy was more powerful and held a more imposing attitude in Europe than that of France. But the latter after being torn to pieces by religious factions, became enlightened by toleration, and fell under the dominion of a hero. whilst the former was hushed asleep in the arms of a bigotted monster, better calculated to calumniate than to civilize mankind. Whilst Henry full of glory and the projects of honourable reform was arranging the foundations of a splendid kingdom. Philip was putting down the spirit of independence by the unanswerable arguments of the sword and the gibbet-was extinguishing the spirit of reform in the damps of the inquisition and lulling the pangs of his conscience by a reverential submission to the casuistry of his confessor.

Before the reign of Henry IV. the French nobles were a rough martial race of men living in castles surrounded by ditches, and who, though full of activity in the agitation of war, slumbered away existence in the tranquillity of peace. The ecclesiastical corps, though animated by the zeal of intolerance, were dissolutely free in their morals, and prone to perpetuate ignorance, whilst the great mass of the people lived in a state of misery and insignificance almost on a level with the brute creation. To remedy these evils Henry encouraged the nobles to reside in the country, and impressed them with the belief that the good management of their estates was a surer road to fortune than an obsequious dangling at the heels of the monarch. He taught them by his example to live simply; to cultivate an acquaintance with their tenantry; to instruct them in agriculture and to soften as far as possible the severity of their condition.

But however much the beneficent administration of Henry did to abate the ferocity of national manners it lasted too short a time to effect an entire moral revolution in the kingdom. On the contrary a variety of circumstances prove how far the French were from being entirely humanized before his death. The many attempts on the life of this pattern of kingly excellence; the sanguinary phlegm with which the court probably destroyed him at last; the licentious disorders that were perpetually breaking out over the kingdom in spite of his good government, and the fact that the theatres were obliged to open at two o'clock, in order not only to avoid the mud in the streets, but the assassins that prowled through them during the darkness of the night, are sufficient, I think, to warrant the assertion that the beginning of the seventeenth century was not the golden age of morality in France, and that she was not even during this blossoming period of the olden time, in any degree happier or better than she is at present.

I have already suggested that the spectacle of political grandeur, which modern Europe offers to our regards, was unfolding itself at that time, and that it was the impetus which France derived from her civil wars and from Henry's genius that carried her prosperity so high and enabled her to take the lead among modern nations. The pleasing influence of Henry's character in smoothing the asperities of ruder manners by the refinements of gallantry, and in sweetening the bonds of social intercourse by gayety and politeness, is yet discernable in France after the lapse of so many ages. I may hereafter have occasion also to point out how much the liberty of conscience he established in this country promoted its prosperity, and how soon the loss of it led to the decay both of private morality and national grandeur; for although the singular coincidence may never have been observed, it is unquestionably true, that the sun of French glory during her monarchy seems to have risen on the publication of the edict of Nantz in 1598; to have gradually ascended for near a century when it touched its meridian in the year of the revocation of that edict, 1685, and to have declined from that day forth till it went down after nearly an equal lapse of time in the stormy sea of the revolution.

The salutary maxims of Henry's administration were somewhat checked in their operation by the machiavelian principles of his queen, for France was twice scourged by matrimonial connexions with the princes of Italy. To Catharine of Medicis, conjointly with the Guises, she owed the massacres and desolations of the Ligue, together with that madness of bigotry and taste for blood, from which she has found it difficult to rid herself. To Maria, she was indebted, if not for the death of Henry, at least for the disgrace of Sully, and the perfidious education of Louis XIII. as well as the suppression of the states general, and as many of the wise regulations of Henry, as were not too firmly dove-tailed into the government, to be separated by her mischievous hands.

In the session of the states general, held in 1614, after the death of Henry, a like spirit of independence to that which began to display itself about that time among the Commons of England, broke out among those of France. One of the first declarations of that assembly was, that no power, either temporal or spiritual, had a right to dispose of the kingdom, or to dispense with the oaths of allegiance; and that to assert that the church might authorise the assassinating of kings, was both impious and detestable. There was something however in this language, too audaciously liberal for the temper of the nobles or clergy, and the court, in spiritless or cunning acquiescence with their sentiments, dissolved the assembly, and not choosing ever afterwards to convene it, the crown gradually usurped its powers. At that time, the French people were not intelligent enough to feel that they had a right to legislate for themselves, nor did the nobles sufficiently understand the science of government, to foresee that the loss of political power condemned them to insignificance.

In England, although the royal prerogative was carried high during the long and prosperous reign of Elizabeth, a number of great mon had sprung up to diffuse intelligence over the nation, and to set it to thinking on political, as well as on theological subjects. The good principles which they disseminated had time to take root during the dreaming reign of king James, so that when his son came to the throne, the love of privilege had acquired sturdiness and vigour enough to resist the shocks of prerogative. When the storm afterwards came on with greater fury, common sense too was sufficiently alive to be aware that nothing could save the nation but a resolution to brave it. The English, therefore, renovated their free principles by a successful rebellion.

In France, on the contrary, the sentiment of civil liberty had not had time to work itself well into the public mind, before the reins of government fell into the hands of one of the most pernicious subduers of the human intellect, that the accidents of modern diplomacy have brought to light. You will readily perceive that I allude to the Cardinal de Richelieu, who came into absolute power in 1624, and continued to hold it near twenty years; who, by very enlarged plans of external policy, dazzled the imaginations of his contemporaries, but who used every insidious stratagem to break down the spirit of liberty and independence at home, and to consolidate on their ruins the foundations of despotism. He possessed, as Mably observed, an inordinate thirst of power, without either the virtues or the lights, that are desirable in the leader of a great nation. But to a lofty demeanor, he united that inflexibility of character which subdues common souls, and which fatigues or astonishes those that are endowed with more than ordinary courage and prudence.

The only sparkles of republicanism that were stricken out by the collision of hostile factions in France, before the late revolution, appeared among the disciples of Calvin during Richelieu's administration. But this lynx-eyed tyrant was among the first to toresee their consequences. He loved despotism for itself, and saw evidently that there would be a general conflagration of the edifice of both church and state tyranny, unless these occasional fires were extinguished before the flame acquired volume enough to throw light on, and reveal the gloomy purposes of his soul. He therefore turned all his engines that way, and extinquished them by a shower of blood.

Henry IV. who had valued no greatness but that which was founded on virtue, because that only could be sound and durable, had encouraged the sentiments of honour, loyalty, and frankness among his nobles, with a view of communicating those qualities through them to the body of the nation; but Richelieu, whose plans were not of a liberal, but of an atrocious character, endeavoured to destroy virtue by converting honest men into courtiers. In order to weaken the influence of the nobles in the provinces, and destroy their popularity, he obliged them to live in Paris, where, unoccupied by the exercise of political functions, or the interests of their tenantry, they had nothing to do but to copy his magnificence, and to idle away their lives in the refinements of luxury, and the giddy amusements of the court. Richelieu intended, by thus breaking down the aristocracy, to simplify the machine of government,---to give a more vigorous and rapid action to its parts, and to cause the whole to perform its evolutions for the advantage only of the crown. His system of policy, which went to invigorate the head at the expense of all the other members of the body politic, created that fatal ascendency of Paris over France-that trembling submission of a whole kingdom to the frantic caprices of a single city, which caused her to exhibit so strange a political phenomenon in all the phases of her late revolution.

Happily, however, for France, the tyranny of this minister, (under whom offences were not judged on the principles of written law, but after the dictates of arbitrary caprice,) did not last long enough to extirpate all the seeds of virtue and independence out of the French character. There were enough left to produce a rich growth in the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV. and to have yielded an abundant harvest in the close of it, if he too had not ignobly expended all his powers in advancing the same system of injustice and oppression.

At the death of Richelieu and Louis XIII. which happened before the middle of the seventeenth century, France was beginning to gather some of the fruits of the wise administration of Sully. The general condition of society was improved by the encouragement he had given to industry and by his reduction of taxes; whilst his institutions of education had eherished the abilities of such men as Corneille and Descartes, who came like

12

the rosy steeds of Apollo to usher in the glorious morning of science. A darkness, however, as profound as that which prevailed when the parliament of Paris forbade, under pain of death, the teaching of any doctrine contrary to that of Aristotle, was not to be dissipated in a moment;---nor could a nation whose prejudices condemned the marechal D'Ancre to the flames for conjuration, and the curate of Laudon for bewitching a convent of nuns. (not to speak of larger enormities) lay any strong claim to a general rectitude of moral sentiment. Richelieu, it is true, is the model of a great minister in the eyes of the advocates of modern legitimacy, but the reign of Louis XIII. is not their darling period of French history, and therefore we may dispense with the nauseous drudgery of recalling its immoralities in order to prove that France was not then more moral than she is at present. An attentive consideration of those of the prouder and more conspicuous reign that followed may be full of instruction; and though the contemplation of the dark side of human nature is an occupation that I do not love, it may, like the study of anatomy, be justified by the good that may grow out of it.

LETTER H.

Paris, Feb 5th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

There are but few periods in the history of mankind that open themselves with more imposing grandeur on the imagination than the reign of Louis XIV. and not one perhaps better calculated to delude the opinions of superficial observers. The spectacle of a monarch, endowed by nature with the charms of an elegant figure and some of the powers of a subduing mind, naturally carries in itself something imposing along with it. Bat when in addition to these adventitious advantages we recollect that Louis was called by the accidents of birth at an early age to reign over a large and compact territory, inhabited by a brave and loyal people, pushed up in the scale of civilization by the energy of new institutions; when we remember the brilliancy of his court, the fame of his victories in the field, and of his conquests in the drawing room, we may easily imagine that such a prince should give the utmost illusion to the splendour of absolute power, and become the admiration of those who contemplate government more as a thing of show than of use. Hence, among violent royalists the reign of Louis XIV. is considered the neplus ultra of every thing that is excellent in government. Without treating those gentlemen however with the harshness of the author of the Essay on Despotism, who declares "que tout fauteur du despotisme est un lâche que la terreur ou l'interet conduisent." let us test the truth of their opinions by inquiring into what that government was in reality as well as in appearance. We may thus discover whether he found the materials of a brilliant empire prepared at his hands or created them-and whether the men of genius who flourished in the course of the seventythree years that he swayed the sceptre of France owed their existence, as his flatterers pretend, to the vivifying rays of royal

favour, or were treated by him during their lives with indignity and neglect.

I think the reign of Louis XIV. may be aptly divided into three parts—the first to embrace that period of near twenty years when cunning, confusion, and roguery prevailed under Mazarine—the second, a rather longer term of triumphant prosperity, under the wiser administration of Colbert—and the third, the last thirty years of iniquity and ruinous expedients under Louvois, and his atracious successors. There is something indeed so melancholy in the spectacle of human infirmity, which this last period exhibits, that it disposes one to exclaim in the language of the sweetest poet that adorned it,

> "Heureux si j'avois pu ravir à la memoire, Cette indigne moitié d'une si belle histoire."

PREDES.

Mazarine trod directly in the steps of Richelieu, and though less serviceable to his king, was not less cruel to his country. He did not happen to unite to his acuteness and cunning the domineering talents of his predecessor, and therefore in spite of his arbitrary power and dexterity in intrigue, he threw France into the most ridiculous of all civil broils, that of the Fronde, in which the nobles while boasting of their allegiance to their king levied war on his minister. In truth Richelieu had so imbued the public mind with terror and accustomed it to servitude that it was quite incapable of receiving an impulse from any enlarged or independent scheme of ambition. One is almost tempted to imagine, therefore, that this war was got up like a tilt or tournament in preceding ages for the pleasure of military excitement-for the sake of chattering and having something to do; and yet its ludicrous character did not prevent its being a great calamity to France. It served only to heighten the aversion of the young king from all popular privileges, to teach the nation to confound civil liberty with civil dissention, and to regard therefore the strengthening of the royal prerogative as the best security of its rights. It is, as well as I remember, in speaking of the havoc and inroads it made or continued on the welfare of society that Voltaire observed, that with the exception of the ten beautiful years of the hero of France, he did not believe "que depuis François II. jusqu'a l'extinction de la Fronde en France, il y ait un seul jour sans meurtre."* I do not know that we have a right to censure a minister

* Vol. XX. p. 128.

for not rising in wisdom above the age in which he lived, yet I think it may be fairly said of Colbert, that his fame, "like bright metal on a sullen ground has pleased more eyes and shown more goodly" from having had the vices and ignorance of his successors as foils to set it off. Since the web of political economy however, has been unravelled, if his policy has been censured with the bitterest vituperation by some, it has also received every variety of praise from the stately eulogiums of Neckar to the fiery applause of Voltaire.

Prior to the administration of Colbert the manufactures of France were so rude, that whatever was elegand was imported from abroad. Under his care, the cloth manufactures of Louviers and Sedan, and those of silk at Lyons, Nismes, and Tours, grew up to prosperity, whilst the zeal of his enterprise covered the ocean with the ships of France and enabled her navy to threaten the safety of Europe. Agriculture too flourished beyond what it had done at any former period, notwithstanding that absurd prohibition of the exportation of grain, which from a timid apprehension of the thoughtlessness of French impetuosity was continued in force until 1764. He lightened the burthens of taxation and yet nearly trebled the national income, carrying it from thirty-two to ninety-two millions of livres in the course of his administration. His good schemes it is true were much thwarted by the passions of the monarch, the prejudices of the people, and the baseness of courtiers. But under the vigour of his hand, Turenne and Condè marched with victory perched on the banner of the lily-Vauban sat smiling at the impotent thunder of an hundred pieces of artillery---Perrault and Mansard struck the earth with the mace of genius and magnificent palaces arose, whilst Le Brun animated their walls by the magic of his pencil, and Le Notre decorated their gardens with the enchantments of Elysium.

Had the successors of Colbert gone on in the track he opened, France must have attained before this time an unequalled height of prosperity; but his sudden amelioration of every thing not only elated beyond the bounds of reason the national vanity of a people like this, fond of superiority and prone to shew it, but led them into the presumptuous conclusion, that they had attained perfection in all the arts. Hence originated as we shall hereafter see, if not the cramping system of Jurandes, at least these laws which by condemning every thing to be made, as it had hitherto been made, prohibited both the improvements of taste and the inventions of genius. I am therefore inclined to think that those who have most praised this minister have done an act of justice to his memory, and that those who have censured him have tended to enlighten their country by teaching her to break loose from the bonds of his authority. Yet so few ministers have done as much to civilize the world and to subdue the human heart to the empire of reason by the charms of literature, that he not only merits (in the language of M. Neckar) "les benedictions de son pays, et les applaudissemens de l'univers" but the more fanciful compliment of the peet,

Two principles predominated in the soul of Lewis XIV. ambition and the love of pomp; and as neither of these could be gratified without money, he retained Colbert in service, not from affection but because he could not do without him. A king who steps from the cradle to the throne can have no knowledge of human nature, and would be entitled to indulgence for the follies of his youth if his vices did not increase with age. How far this was the case with Louis XIV. and how far his vices go to prove the fundamental unfitness of arbitrary government for the promotion of human happiness, it may not be useless to inquire.

At the time Louis XIV. ascended the throne, education had already done much to enlighten the higher orders of society; but you should perpetually keep in mind, that under the old regime, this class was as distinct from the body of the nation, as if heaven had separated them by difference of complexion. The progress of refinement on the higher classes of society, is no doubt much advanced by men of letters, and the fine inspirations of Corneille and Racine, did as much, I am willing to believe, to elevate the tone of moral sentiment and patriotism in France, as the spirited wit of Moliere, and the pungent satire of Boileau did, to refine the taste of the well educated, or to ridicule into disrepute the prejudices and vulgarities of coarser ages. The spirit of philosophical enquiry too, began about that time to push its researches with some boldness, and to give a more

serious cast to the fluctuating principles of morality. The ecclesiastical government had, since the edict of Nantz, ceased to be an absolute despotism; the translation of the Scriptures had opened a wider field for the meditations of the religious, and the inseparable connexion which should subsist between religion and morality, was beginning to be sensibly felt and generally ac-When the doctrines of Calvin began to circulate knowledged in France, the ministers of the established church but seldom delivered sermons to their congregations,* because a system commanded by law, and fortified by custom, required not the sanction of the understanding to preserve its dominion. But a tolerated difference of opinion soon awakened inquiry, and it then became necessary, in order to check the progress of Calvinism, to address the reason of their followers. The clergy, who when their authority was unquestioned, had been disposed to regard with indulgence the errors of their flocks, because it threw a veil over the scandal of their own lives, new found themselves watched with such vigilance, that they were obliged to reform their own habits. The vehement emulation and collision of religious zeal which this opposition of sects produced. struck out during the reign of Louis XIV. the brightest sparkles of eloquence that adorn the annals of the Gallic church; nor should it be forgotten, that all its great luminaries were reared before the repeal of the edict of Nantz. Among those who appeared afterwards, we may look in vain for the splendid flame of fanaticism which glows in the discourses of Bossuet; for the majestic step of reasoning eloquence that dignifies those of Bourdalous; for the flood of rich imaginations that overflows in the works of Massillon, or that stream of lovely morality which meanders so beautifully through the pages of Fenelon. No, this class of orators disappeared with the controversy which produced them, and the shroud of ignorance once more extended itself over the bier of pulpit eloquence. Toleration lasted long enough to blight many of the branches of the tree of depravity in France, and if it had not been interrupted by Louis XIV. it might have so blasted the root as to have prevented those sturdy shoots which afterwards acquired vigour enough to support a scaffold for his posterity.

* Histoire des Guerres civiles, v. 1st. p. 257.

We are told by Voltaire* that the French were yet so savage when Louis XIV. ascended the thrane, that in the twenty years which preceded that event, (although ten years of war,) more Frenchmen perished by the hands of their friends in single combat, than by the sword of the enemy. One of the happiest effects of the refinement of Louis's court was the introduction of a preference of decent society, above that vulgar spirit of tavern licentiousness which so brutalizes the habits of a gentleman. But Louis was a man of show, not of reality. In the dissipations of his court, he forgot the misery of his people, and showed no higher ambition in the exercise of his splendid authority, than that of breaking down the independent spirit of his nobles, and teaching them to bear with servility the despotical dogmas of his inordinate vanity. That the impertinent scorn of the rights of mankind, which induced him to ask them, what is the government, "c'est moi," should be admired, is not so remarkable. as that he should be applauded as the patron of genius. HE. the patron of genius, who treated the two greatest captains in his service with jealousy and envious neglect; who perpetually impeded Turenne in his career of glory, and who, by forcing Conde into retirement, induced him to close in obscurity a life which, under more favorable auspices, might have added new lustre to the renown of France? He, the patron of genius, who drove Fenelon into exile for writing Telemachus, and who caused Racine to die of chagrin, for having suggested to him the misery of his subjects, and a remedy for their griefs? He, the patron of genius, who, as Madame de Stael says, "persecuted Port Royal, of which Pascal was the chief;" who suffered La Bruyere to expire in obscurity; who opposed, with unrelenting obstinacy, the rendering of any honor to La Fontaine, and who never showed a preference for any poet except Boileau, by whom he was anointed with the slime of flattery? For my part, I think him just as much entitled to the praise of being a wise and just governor. He, who from the bosom of a court, in which the genius of elegant voluptuousness spread the banquet, and the graces presided, could send forth the bloody edicts of persecution, and give the word of command for the hunt of the Huguenots? He, who suffered an infamous minister to involve

* Siécle de Louis XIV.

him in war to prevent him from criticising the windows of the Trianon, and who signed an order to lay waste, with fire and sword, the beautiful country of the Palatinate, in order to heighten the terror of his name, and animate the flagging conversation of his court? There is not in all the code of the revolutionary convention, an act of more cold-blooded cruelty than that. Indeed it is scarcely possible, even at this time, after the lapse of so many years, and the restoration of the unfortunate country which was entirely devastated in the depth of winter, to read the cruel mandate, which delivered up so many towns, and villages, and chateaux, and cottages, to the flames, and the very tombs themselves to be torn open by the rapacity of the soldiers, without feeling one's blood run cold with horror? Iŧ should be taken into consideration too, that at the moment he thus spurned the obligations of humanity and honor, in committing this atrocious crime, (1688,) he had enjoyed an uninterrupted course of prosperity from the beginning of his reign; that he was superior to all his enemies united, and the terror of Europe. It was then, that after having driven near half a million of Protestants from his kingdom, by the revocation of the Edict. of Nantes, (1685,) having suffered the members of that sect to be hunted down like wild beasts in a forest, and delivered to torture before they were consigned to the flames; having confiscated their property for the good of those who denounced them; having declared their children illegitimate, and torn them from their families to be educated in another faith, or hurried to the gallies: it was then, in fine, that his painters and his poets were ordered to Versailles, to represent him as the sun irradiating the globe; or, as we may yet behold him on the walls of that palace, as a sort of beautiful Vulcan, forging chains for the cities he ordered to be besieged; or leaping over the Rhine in the character of the God of War, with the lightning of Jupiter in his hand, and the laurels of Apollo on his brow.

It is from this epoch, however, that the decline of the relative power of the French monarchy takes its date; that the government became impoverished at home by the loss of its artizans, and disgraced abroad by the defeat of its armies. The distresses of the treasury, from the scandalous prodigality of the court, became so pressing, in ten years after the repeal of the toleration

13

act,* that 1200 dollars might purchase admittance into the ranks of nobility. The number of those tickets of exemption from taxation was so terribly augmented too about that time, that it gave rise to the pleasant sarcasm of "what a pity father Adam did not think to buy a title--we should have been all noble."

Even Voltaire, after remarking that war renders the conqueror in a few years as miserable as the vanquished, fixes on the close of 1688, as the era at which Louis XIV. touched the highest point of his greatness. It is certainly true, that France continued to rise in the scale of European nations as long as she enjoyed religious toleration, and that she began visibly to lose her elevation from the moment she was deprived of it. I know not whether this coincidence of circumstances ever struck the imagination of Voltaire; if it did, I believe he suppressed it, because it could not heighten the colouring of his picture, ner flatter the national vanity of the people, on whose pleasure the reputation of his work was to depend. Yet, in pointing out the fatal consequences of the spirit of persecution on the prosperity of France, he remarks, that by a sort of singular fatality at the very moment the court was becoming polished to excess, the wrath of intolerance rendered it more familiar with the hideous practice of empoisoning than at any previous epoch of its history. The world is perhaps indebted to Madame de Stael for the first true sketch of the character of this hero of the toilette -this grand performer in what Boileau calls "les nobles douceurs d'un sejour plein de charmes." In commenting on his coming with a whip in his hand to the parliament of Paris, to forbid them the exercise of the last remnant of their power, (the right of remonstrance,) I think she observes that he could never conceive the idea of a nation, nor imagine any property to exist in France which did not belong to him, nor entertain a respect for any thing but himself.

The magnificent buildings erected during his reign, have been imagined by some to be the monuments of his greatness, yet I confess I cannot see how the wasting the treasures tyrannically wrested from his people, on works of mere ostentation, can redound to the credit of a voluptuous despot. Voltaire himself, in the heat of panegyric, admits, that if he had expended one

* 1696.

fifth of the money on Paris, which was wasted in erecting hills, and making rivers at Versailles, that he might have rendered every part of the capital as magnificent as the neighbourhood of the Tuilleries, and the whole more superb than any thing of the kind on earth. Now, when we remember that the situation of Versailles is in itself mean and detestable, and was selected only because it was not within view of the steeple of St. Denis, which covers the tomb of the Bourbons--when we recal the enchanting beauties of the scenery that nature has so gracefully scattered along the banks of the Seine, from the lovely heights of Meudon, to the more tranquil terrace of St. Germains, and when we recollect also that the embellishments of Versailles might have adorned any of these hills at one tenth of the expense; I ask what indulgence is the monarch entitled to who thus wastes the resources of his people?

I have entered much more widely into the merits of this bon vieux temps as it is considered of France than I had intended, and have no other apology for having done so than the conviction that the flood of moral evil by which France has been recently deluged, had the channels of inundation opened for it by the follies of the reign of Louis XIV. Like Augustus, my dear Sir, he owes his reputation to the happy accident which called him to reign over a people replete with genius, whose immortal productions have enchanted the public mind, and dropt a curtain over the crimes and infirmities of the monarch.

But may it not serve to rectify the judgments of those who think that the system of morals was pure in France before it was deranged by the disorders of the revolution, to remind them that it is admitted by the historians of this period that the spirit of cruelty and savage thirst of blood among the French people was so far from being glutted by the war of the Cevennes, that it was not even slacked by the *dragonnade* of the protestants. Yet since the people are next to nothing in the eyes of these philanthropic professors of the doctrine of *legitimacy*, let us enquire a little into the spirit of loyalty and chivalrous devotion to their idol, which this new and splendid despotism had infused into their own ranks. The last scene of the life of Louis XIV. is an apt illustration of the disinterestedness of their loyalty. We are told by historians that from the very moment the physician pro-

nounced that his majesty could not survive the following Wednesday, the palace of Versailles was so completely deserted by the flock of titled courtiers, that his bed was left to be guarded by a few hired domestics! But at the moment of this entire abandonment a quack arrived from Provence with a remedy which it was pretended was infallible for the gangrene. The scene was now changed-Versailles, which a few hours before was all silence and solitude, became of a sudden all bustle and confusion. The nobles who had fallen off with such precipitancy from the dying monarch, now rushed back with such impatient eagerness to felicitate him on his probable restoration that the Duke of Orleans observed "if the king eats a second time there will be nobody left in our palace." But fate had fixed it otherwise-his doom was inevitable-the disease was past remedy, and now the loyal gang of ultras, (leaving the eyes of the king to be closed by mercenary hands) were seen flying back again with increased vivacity "to sell themselves as fast as possible to the Due D'Orleans." Such was the honest zeal and magnanimous loyalty which rewarded the last hours of this splendid despot-such the change from rough independence to polished servility which six_ ty years of arbitrary government had effected, and such the fidelity of the times which the whining sycophants of power are perpetually obtruding on us as the golden age of France and the millenium of monarchy! Louis lived long enough to perceive the fluctuations of the current, and to lament the errors of his reign. In his last moments he is said, to have exclaimed in the bitterness of humiliated pride, I am tired of life "je ne desire ni espère la conserver."

The reign of Louis XIV. as I have suggested before, bears a strong resemblance to that of Augustus, except that the latter began in troubles, and ended in the tranquillity of permanent good fortune, whilst the first half of the former was spent in a blaze, of prosperity, and the last under the cloud of adversity.— Both, however, commenced after a long period of domestic discord and civil war; both had their years of massacre and proscription; both were conducted with splendour, and ennobled by talents, nursed, if not created, by the liberal spirit of institutions to which the agitations of preceding times had given rise; both broke down independence ot mind and fidelity of heart among the nobles, and conducted the nation to a state of servility and corruption. In the century which followed these reigns over Rome and France, each suffered the extremes of despotism and anarchy; each was trampled on by a set of the bloodiest monsters that heaven ever sent forth in its wrath to scourge mankind; and if the spirit of liberty was not in France as it was in Rome, smothered in the stagnant pool of despotism, it is to the redeeming intelligence of the times, diffused by the art of printing, that she owes its preservation.

Anne, of Austria, it is said, advised her son to imitate his grandfather in preference to his father, because at the death of Henry IV. the people wept, and at that of Louis XIII. they laughed. He pursued a very different course of policy from either, and the day of his death was a day of rejoicing and gladness, in which his subjects sang songs of joy in the streets, insulting his memory, and loading it with obloquy. Henry IV. entered Paris by force and stratagem, amid the imprecations of swinish bigots, who would have rent the air with shouts at his immolation; but he exercised his power with such wisdom and benevolence, that for several days after his death Paris exhibited such a scene of lamentation, that, we are assured by historians, the excess of grief produced the same effect as a contagious disease. Louis XIV. quietly ascended the throne of his ancestors to govern a brave nobility, and a people devoted to his interest and ready to die in his defence; he exercised power however with such a contemptuous disdain of the rights of his subjects, that his death was not only followed by a scene of dissolute gayety and intemperance, but his remains were hissed and hooted at on their way to St. Denis. This ebullition of joy was, if possible, increased a few days after, when by orders from the Regent, the dungeons of Vincennes and the Bastile were unlocked, and the numberless martyrs that he had incarcerated for theological enigmas, came forth with pallid countenances and emaciated forms, to excite the compassion of the multitude.

Louis XIV. after fifty-six years of war, left the finances of France in so foundering a condition, that the embarrassments of the treasury under the regency, led to the proposition of national bankruptcy The deficiencies of the revenue for the current expenses of the year are said to have been seventy-seven millions of livres. The machine of finance was never able to discucamber itself from these difficulties till the revolution, when the mass of embarrassments having so far accumulated as to clog its wheels, it ceased to revolve altogether.

In speaking of the state of private morals at the close of this reign, Montesquieu observes, that men were not at all disapproved of for suffering the infidelity of their wives-that husbands were in the habit of speaking very little of them, for fear of mentioning them to those who knew them better than themselves-and that there was but one character that all the world hated and laughed at-a jealous husband. He goes much farther on this subject than I choose to follow him, and after all due allowance for the exaggerations of satire, I think it must be admitted that France was not then the Eden of domestic bliss. Yet Ultra Royalists assert, that Louis XIV. was the most successful monarch in curbing the extravagancies of disorderly opinions-the most exemplary in the exercise of his religious duties-the most splen. did wearer of majesty-and the most indefatigable in spreading civilization, that ever sat on the French throne! It might be asked in vain of them, was it the spirit of true religion that delivered up his conscience to the jesuitical doctrine of the end sanctifying the means, when, with fire and sword, he chased the Huguenots out of his kingdom? Was it a christian zeal to gov. ern France after the dictates of justice and sow the seeds of honour in his nation, that led him to impoverish it by guilty wars, and to throw the whole patronage of the crown into the hands of his mistresses? All this they contend proves nothing, since France acquired a pre-eminence in Europe under his direction. They will not admit, that one man may have had the gathering of the harvest, and another the ploughing and sowing of the glebe; or that the wisdom of every scheme of administration ought to be judged of from its general, and not from its partial results. For my part I cannot help thinking, that the ball of empire had already acquired its momentum when Louis XIV. mounted upon it, and that he deserves no more credit for the hand with which he steadied its course, than Phæton for the presumptuous ignorance with which he misguided the chariot of the sun. If any doubt can remain on your mind of the correctness of this opinion, I would refer you, for confirmation of it, to the funeral discourse of Massillon

on this monarch. In speaking of the pompous monuments of this extravagant reign, that prelate asks, what will they recal to posterity but an entire age of horror and carnage, in which the flower of the French nobility were hurried to their tombs, to the despair of their parents and the extinction of their families-"nos campagnes desertes; nos villes désolees; nos peuples épuisés, les arts à la fin sans emulation, le commerce languissant," and such a frightful dissolution of morality, as might be supposed to draw down the indignation of heaven on the French nation ----Yet even this eloquent divine, after admitting, that by the policy of Louis no vestige of the modesty of their fathers was left in France, save their old and respectable portraits, which from the walls of their palaces, looked with repreach on their descendants; after railing at the profane writers who sold their pens to iniquity, and celebrated him for "remuant l'univers du sein des voluptes,"* does not, in his turn, omit to applaud the pious zeal and wisdom of that king in destroying the Huguenots, and even to declare that their extinction will redound "a la gloire eternelle de Louis!"

Henriade.

53667

LETTER III.

Paris, Feb. 10th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

We have now come, I think, to the beginning of a period, which may be in some degree, considered as the prelude of the revolution. It is here necessary to look somewhat attentively into the domestic habits of the court, which have of necessity much influence on those of the nation, and to observe, as we go along, the origin of that spirit of liberty which, however feeble and fluctuating at first, slowly expanded itself, until by gaining a crowd of proselytes too corrupt to comprehend its nature, it degenerated into the spirit of anarchy and faction.

The splendid scene of government which had opened itself with such royal magnificence under Louis XIV. was followed by a reign of riot, debauchery and folly, under the regency of Or-The tone of moral sentiment which Louis had found leans. tolerably vigorous and well braced, had been gradually relaxing its tension during the thirty years which preceded his death (1685 to 1715.) But his respect for appearances had so checked the sallies of intemperance, that although religion had imperceptibly dissolved her union with morality, it was not until after his death, that the pride of honesty was discovered to be entirely broken down and all pretension to principle to be as hypocritical as it was ridiculous. As soon, however, as this seeming respect for decency ceased to mask the vices of the court, they appeared in all their natural deformity. From the first days of the regency, libertinism not only ceased to seek concealment. but braved public opinion with such audacious grace as to render loose morals an indispensable accomplishment to a man of Blasphemy and oaths were introduced by the impufashion. dent, and applauded by the base; there was no joy in festivity without drunkenness, and no other object in society but the indulgence of debauchery. We are told by a French nistorian, that as "no one now blushed for any excess, no one was offended by any reproach," and that all made a sport of the most violent excesses of iniquity and madness

The passion of love, which had long since lost the elevation of a sentiment, became so profaned that gallantry was a mere ceremony, less and less observed every day The ladies of the court made a sale and traffic even of that power of intercession in favour of the unfortunate, which when decently exercised, had been one of the loveliest of their privileges. Two young unmarried princesses, the daughters of Conde and Orleans, were at the same time the rival mistresses "of that gallant gay Lothario," the young Duc de Richelieu, and with the permission of their indulgent parents, continued their visits to him during his confinement in the Bastile. The masked balls of the opera, which are at this day the resort of scarcely a woman of delicacy or rank, were then introduced to heighten the mysteries of licentiousness, and to give the novices of either sex an easy initiation into the habits of the world. The suppers of the regent are said to have been mere midnight revels of debauchery. A company composed of nobles and harlequine, princesses and opera dancers, held, (over the most delicious dishes and exquisite wines) conversations so frightfully obscene, that a respect for our nature almost makes me disdain the recollection of them. The past and present gallantries of the court and city, scandalous stories, disputes, pleasantries and ridicule, in which no body was spared, nor any thing in heaven above nor on the earth beneath was respected, were the topics which delighted these polished pupils of Louis XIV. "On buvait beaucoup du meilleur vin, on s'echauffait, on disait des ordures a gorge deployée, et des impietés à qui mieux mieux, et quand on avait fait du bruit, et qu'on etait bien ivre on s'allait coucher."*

The many hideous suspicions which stain the history of France during that age are alone an evidence of its depravity. Not to mention the earlier disgusting obliquities of the young king, it is impossible to forget that the Regent could not sup with his own

• Such is the statement of an eye witness, the Due de SC Simon. It was at one of these suppers that the Counters of Sabran said to the Regent, "Dieu apres avoir erée l'homme prit un reste de boue dont il fait l'amejdes Princes et des Laquais." daughters, nor Cardinal Tencin with his own sisters without exciting suspicions at which the human heart recoils. Neither could any member of the royal family or distinguished person die without having their deaths attributed to poison. It may have been the malice of the multitude, or the vices of the great, whichever you please, that invented or executed these crimes, but the morality of that nation could not have been very pure in which such ideas could prevail.

The courts of justice "la chambre ardente" which under the Medicis had been disgraced by fanaticism, was now dishonoured by venality, and as the public had no other revenge for injustice and injury than witty epigrams on the meanness and cupidity of their governors, they could scarcely be expected to retain much respect for them. When the mother of Orleans died, a wit wrote on her tomb "ci-git l'oisiveté" and added below "la mere de tous les vices."

It is an historical fact likewise that the tutor of Louis XV. the Abbe Dubois was constantly in the habit of representing virtue to his pupil as a chimera of weak heads, or as a lie invented by cunning impostors to delude the credulity of fools. What reason then is there to be surprised that this king should have governed a state without vigour and a church without virtue-that under his administration a respect for religion should have parted with the last anchors that held it to the public mind of France-that it should have been since on shore by the storm of infidelity, and that every wave of royal intolerance should have only served to wash off some of the good people that clung to the wreck? When under the regency of Bourbon the reins of the French government were handed over to a titled courtezan (La Marquise de Prie) who united a hypocritical zeal for the forms of the established church, to an impious contempt of its tenets; when she was seen letting loose with even keener vengeance than Louis XIV. the blood hounds of religious persecution, can we wonder that the French people lost all respect for ceremonies which such a creature commanded them to reverence? When by the orders of this seemingly religious lady the memory of those who died out of the church was blasted without the hope of redemption-when pastors were condemned to death, and their flocks to confiscation of goods for any suspected relapse into the practice of their

faith-when children were torn* from their parents to have their consciences trimmed by Jesuits, do you think that the glittering rank of this high priestess of church government could hide from an enlightened community the cruelty of such measures, or inspire them with respect for a system of government which invested her with power? The extremes of opinion have been justly said to be nearer each other than the means, as the ends of a cord may be drawn around a circle till they meet. Thus in speculative matters a man is almost invariably in the wrong in proportion to the violence of his opinions, or his positiveness of being in the right. Reason and virtue occupy the centre, or middle ground. Hence a levelling Jacobin is easily converted into a despotist, and a religionist into an infidel. The most vicious of monarchs, Louis XV. was a miserable bigot. Under him when a man was ill and refused the Roman sacrament and died, his goods were confiscated and his body dragged through the streets and thrown into a ditch-if he recovered, he was condemned to confiscation of property and perpetual labour at the gallies. Such intelerance disgusted the nation; for religion cannot be created by secular power-those only love it who embrace it from reason. Indeed from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes not only were manufactures and agriculture checked, but literature and the fine arts began to decline, and the church to relax the severity of its moral discipline. The great men who adorned the pulpit during the religious controversy successively disappeared without leaving a single character of resembling dignity to fill their places. The zeal of emulation among the clergy gradually sunk into the repose of indolence, and their chief solicitude during the 18th century was for the conservation in both church and state of the prejudices of the teudal ages. In proportion as they fell off from their duties, religion declined into superstition or infidelity as it happened to light on a weak or a vicious mind, and long before the storm of the revolution broke on their heads, their dissolute habits and extortions had not only destroyed the proper respect for the clerical body, but led the nation to imagine a priest a hypocrite and a monk a glutton. No couplet

* The sister of Datens, and a thousand others.

from the stage was ever applauded more than this of *Ædipe* in 1716.

"Nos prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense Notre credulité fait toute leur science."

But although literature had lost something of that purity of taste which characterized the writings of the preceding age, the multiplication of these had prodigiously diffused the superficial intelligence they contained. The art of printing had thrown open the doors of the temple of science to the whole nation, and though reading had not yet made the French profound thinkers on moral subjects, it gave an impulse to the public mind which sent it in pursuit of truth. Literature had not been as powerful a promoter of the prosperity of the nations of antiquity as it might have been, because they did not possess the means of diffusing it; and hence among the earlier authors of France none seem to have been aware that their writings might advance the happiness of mankind, or that the discoveries of philosophy might influence the fate of nations.

Under the administration of Cardinal Dubois in particular a band of mercenary and depraved writers became the oracles of fashion and obscenity, and emptied out a stream of rancid pollution in a style just suited to demoralize the half educated part of the nation. If the corrupt government of France did not produce this state of things, how does it happen that England (a country not less advanced at that time before France in political and moral science, than she was in physical, by the preference of the Newtonian over the Carthesian system) how does it happen that she too was not inundated by drains from this pool of corruption? To what are we to attribute her escape but to toleration, and to the free principles which time and patriotism had incorporated into her constitution? In the enjoyment of toleration she had grown wise; for toleration acts on a nation as if God were to open "the windows of heaven and send the sun of righteousness with glorious apparition" to discover the abysses of his own wisdom. Had the same light shone on France at that time she too might have acquired liberty and become happy; for few governments have united greater oppression to rouse resistance with less ability to conquer it, than France after the explosion of the wild schemes of Mr. Law. Indeed I can never read such a fact as that stated by Boulainvilliers, that more than ten thousand

persecuted persons were destroyed by the flames, the wheel and the globet under Louis XIV. without a feeling of surprise at the patience and good humour with which this nation submitted to be thus outraged. The spirit of liberty, however, which had never been a very active principle in France had at that time from the long prevalence of arbitrary power, lost nearly all the spring which once animated it. Wealth and knowledge were not yet sufficiently diffused among the middling and lower classes of society to give buoyancy to this sentiment; and among nobles, enriched by exclusive privileges, inured to habits of submission, and then falling into decay, it shewed no symptom of life.

But although the spirit of liberty had been covered up and seemingly extinguished under the mass of rubbish, which it had suited the purposes of petty tyrants and splendid despots to throw upon it, there is something so immortal in its nature. that it can never be extinct in a nation in which the human mind is cultivated. Thus, in France, at the era to which I allude, it found an asylum in the hearts and heads of a few honest men, who gradually imparted it to others. The government severely prohibited any strictures on itself, but suffered the translation of works hostile to the doctrine of divine right, and passive obedience. The casual reflections of its own authors of the preceding age too, may have slightly touched the spring of moral and political inquiry; but it was the English philosophers and statesmen, (Mr. Locke and his pupils) who struck, like Moses, the rock of ignorance, and opened the fountains of wisdom. Those who perceived the beginning of this stream, were probably as little aware of the fulness it was one day to acquire, as the persons who view the sources of the Nile are from imagining that it may gather water enough in its course, first to inundate, and afterwards to fertilize the plains of Egypt.

If France had possessed a free press, bad writers would never have found encouragement to pervert her moral sentiments. The permission to publish any thing soon ceases to be an evil in a community that is tolerably honest and free, for that which nobody buys, it is nobody's interest to publish. In this country, during the reign of Louis XV. the burning of a book by the hands of a common hangman, only heightened its reputation, by leading the public to think the Court had not sense enough to answer it. Hence, it was observed, by one of the mischievous wits of that reign, (I think Voltaire,) on hearing that one of his books had been condemned, "so much the better: books are like Lyon's chesnuts, the more you toast them, the better they are."

The diffusion of education and knowledge was working a change in the French nation throughout the last century. In Great Britain, the political powers of the nobility gave them personal independence and dignity, whilst their frequent intermarriage with the commons blended them with the nation. But in France, the noblesse seem to have fancied themselves another race from the people, and could never render great enough the distance which separated them from the bourgoisie. This arrogance might have been supportable when learning was nearly confined to them, but it became intolerable after the diffusion of education and wealth had begun to level the arbitrary distinctions of society. The tree of aristocracy had grown to a majestic height in the preceding reign of Louis XIV. because it had east root in a soil enriched by letters; but that very soil which thus enabled it to carry its branches high, and to extend them wide, had now vegetated other scions, and pushed them forward so fast, that they soon united the elevation of age to the vigour of youth. The natural consequence of this was, that the old tree should become less useful, and should soon cease to be either cherished for its shade, or venerated for its antiquity. Aristocracy was no doubt, in ancient times, a great benefit to free states, because the cultivation of the mind of a part, at least, of a nation, is essential to its prosperity, and because the means of acquiring knowledge were then too costly to admit of its general diffusion. But, in consequence of this restraint on education, the greatness or the decay of the free states of antiquity, was dependent on the virtue or the corruption of one class of men. Luxury was therefore fatal to them; and hence, precipitate thinkers are in the habit of concluding that a taste for the fine arts leads to the decline of a state. But there is no idea more erroneous in its application to modern nations; for the discovery of the art of printing, has created in these a capacity of self-regeneration, which prevents them from being enervated by the luxury of their nobles, and which, in fact, has done away with the chief use of aristocracy.

Under Cardinal Fleury, who, in every thing except capidity, possessed the morality of a courtier, and who lived in a society odiously dissolute, without either encouraging or condemning its practices, France enjoyed a repose dangerous to despotism. Educated people, when their curiosity is not taken up by the bustle of military operations, begin to think; and although Fleury had the address to cass off his elegant prattling for the trifling of a sage, he had not ability enough to turn the tide of opinion which was then beginning to run, with a steady current, against existing establishments. The restrictions on the press began to be very sensibly felt, and the censorship (which acted as a quarantine on every book, in order to spunge out of it every bold truth it might contain,) to be condemned. Authors fell into Milton's opinion, that to kill a man is to kill a reasoning creature; but to stifle a good book, is to kill reason itself; and Voltaire, whose writings exercised great influence over the age in which he lived did not hesitate to declare: "Qu'il ne doit pas etre plus defendu d'ecrire que de parler; que telle est la loi D'Angleterre, pays monarchique, mais ou les hommes sont plus libre qu'ailleurs parce qu'ils sont plus eclairés." When the Encyclopedia. made its appearance, the reins of the French government were in the hands of the wanton De Pompadour, the accomplished daughter of a butcher. She sat on the box too, in a very commanding attitude, cheering philosophy at one moment by a smile. and withering it at another by a reprimand-braving public opinion with the most unwinking effrontery, she conducted the chariot of state sometimes according to the calculations of her own interest, but much more frequently after the dictates of her caprice. Is it to be wondered at, then, that it encountered some dissolving jars as it went along; or that the French nation should not have seen with any patience the victorious legions of Britain planting at that time the standard of St. George on the ramparts of Quebec? The destinies of England, during this regency of Madame de Pompadour, had fallen into hands of as opposite a description, as if Providence had designed to contrast the institutions of the two rival nations. Though the king of England might not have been more highly gifted with talent than the king of France, the free spirit of his people had called into his council, men of the most gigantic talents. The "bright orb" of

Chatham's genius, was just then in the meridian of its sublime career, illuminating the parliament of Great Britain by its effulgense, and leading on, like the pillar of fire in the desert, her arms to glory. For my part, I confess I was never surprised, that this noble nation should have been inspired with dissatisfaction by this humiliating contrast; nor that authors, who, like Voltaire, Diderot, and their coadjutors, wrote one day in their own apartments, and the next in the chambers of the Bastile or the dungeons of Vincennes, should have pushed their observations far on the subject of tyranny, and even been willing to shoot, like flying Parthians, their arrows with a deadly aim at the institutions which pampered their oppressors.

Despotism and the general diffusion of knowledge are incompatible. The arches of a fabrie, whose foundations are laid on ignorance and force, cannot maintain their stability after their butments are undermined. The French writers were probably aware of this truth, and knowing that a revolution in things must follow a revolution in opimion, were glad to carry on their work in any way. The governors of Austria, Prussia, and Italy, have now discovered it likewise, and therefore labour, with unwearied vigilance, to bar out every beam of light that approaches their frontiers. Their officers garrison every road to arrest the books and journals of foreign countries, and to rummage even the trunks of travellers; and, in some places, exercise the right of domiciliary visits, to secure any stray volume that may have escaped the vigilance of the first scrutiny.

For twenty years after the middle of the last century, the history of France is the mere repetition of puerile debauches and pusillanimous intrigues. Such was the beastly sensuality of the monarch, that he was incapable of giving any impulse to the nation, and the government became so weak, that it was called "la bonne machine qui va toute seule."

To rail at the government, deceive women, and ridicule religion, now became the light and fashionable accomplishments of the day; for, as most men imitated, as far as they were able, the habits of the court, a general similitude of manners and vices began to prevail. The national vanity, or patriotism itself, fell so low, that the return of peace in 1763, although purchased at the price of honour, was celebrated by a public jubilee. Such a vehement admiration of England had taken possession of the imaginations of some, that they were scarcely wounded by her success over their own country. All these circumstances tended to loosen the machine of state, and if it still continued to revolve, it did so as the deer continues his course, even after he has received the ball of death.

During the war which preceded that peace, the treasures of France had been lavished on Madame de Pompadour, instead of the army. She received for herself, en perpetuité, an annual income of a million and a half of livres; and found ample means of gratifying the avarice of her subordinate harpies, by "acquits du comptant," or notes requiring nothing but the signature of the king to be paid. The French historians glide as smoothly as possible over this disgraceful period of their history, and yet state, that such was her wealth, that the sale of her furniture lasted for more than a year after her death.

In reviewing the moral state of France under "Louis le bien aimé" it is impossible to pass over in silence one enormity unparalleled in modern times. Posterity may be disposed to doubt, whether that monarch really presided at a council of physicians 'assembled to devise the means of torturing Damiens, and then requested not to know when the sentence was put in execution, lest it might affect his nerves; but alas! it cannot doubt the existence of the "Parc aux cerfs." This establishment is said to have been devised by Madame de Pompadour, who imagined that the best means of eluding the dangers of rivalship, would be, to create such a seraglio for the king as might so glut and debase his passions, as to prevent the possibility of his becoming attached to any one. Some elegant houses in the Park of Versailles were accordingly fitted up in the style of an eastern harem, and united by a subterraneous passage with the palace, for the accommodation of his most christian majesty. Emissaries were scattered over the kingdom in search of beauty, and hundreds of young ladies, either sold by the parents, or violently torn from them, were hurried to that establishment, and soon after turned adrift, without the chance of ever beholding their destroyer again. "Corruption," says Lacretelle," "entered into the most peaceful circles and obscure families; whole years were

> * Vol. iii. p. 171. 15

employed to seduce persons under the age of puberty, and to combat in others the sentiment of shame and fidelity." The cost of this infamous establishment has been variously estimated by historians; some have carried it as high as two hundred millions of dollars, and others have brought it as low as one hundred millions of livres, or twentý millions of dollars.

But independent of the depravity of the morals of the court, the records of the tribunals go far to prove, that the administration of justice was not immaculate, nor all the world very virtuous and wise in these good old times. What moral sense of justice could be possessed by such a people as those of Thoulouse, who lighted bon fires, and moved in solemn procession of thanksgiving, to ornament the rack on which Calas was to suffer martyrdom; or to celebrate the anniversary of the day on which four thousand of their citizens had been once murdered, for a different interpretation of the sixth chapter of John?

Can you think, that a nation, in which an old man, like Calas, of seventy; a father of the most exemplary character, with no other evidence against him but his religion and his virtue;* could be condemned to torture and death, because his maniac son had hanged himself, can bring forward any strong claim to the possession of a just criminal code, or even to much rectitude of conscience? Can you believe, that a capital city like this of Paris, in which a boy of seventeen (the Chevalier de la Barre,) was condemned to the ignominy of the wheel and the scaffold. because, in the language of the parliament that condemned him. he was "suspected of having broken a crucifix"-can you think, I ask, that such a city required the frenzy of the revolution to lift up the flood-gates of ferocious fanaticism, in order to deluge it with iniquity? I might go on multiplying examples; but as your own memory can supply them, I will only ask, whether you think a nation, in which outrages of this character were events of frequent occurrence, can deserve to have its vile submission to an iniquitous government ennobled in the language of Mr. Burke, by the terms, "proud submission, and dignified obedience;" or whether its moral sensibility is entitled to the praise of being so delicate as "to have felt a stain as a wound?" It

* See Voltaire's History of his Trial,

should be remembered, likewise, that Mr. Burke wrote those reflections on the revolution before the frenzy of faction had entirely disgraced that enterprize, and that the bitterness of his invectives, which exasperated the passions of the mob against the noblesse, may have served to bring on those sanguinary excesses which he predicted, and afterwards so eloquently described.

LETTER IV.

Paris, Feb. 15th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

THE hints I have thrown together in the preceding letters, are sufficient, I apprehend, to show, that however much despotism may have done to soften and polish the manners of the French, it did not lay itself out at all to rectify their moral sentiments, or to heighten their respect for virtue. Nor is this surprising when we recollect, that rectitude of principle and the diffusion of knowledge, are by no means essential to the prosperity of a form of government, which relies principally for its splendour on the union of dishonesty with a sufficient degree of animal courage, not to allow any man to mention it.

You may observe by the memoirs of the minority of Louis XIV. that although absolute incredulity in matters of religion had not spread itself much beyond the precincts of the court, yet there was no disposition any where shown in society to restrain the assaults of mere wit and ridicule. A narrow system of selfish philosophy had already gone far in turning into derision every generous sentiment or enthusiasm of our nature, except the admiration of genius. This preference of the brilliant accomplishments of the mind over the integrity of the heart, and the useful qualities of the understanding, may be regarded as one of the most pernicious effects of false education and the refinements of artificial society. No country has ever run into a greater extreme in this particular, or paid more dearly for its aberration than France. Here, when the system of debasing the dignity of our species by risible pleasantries, and of bottoming all human action on self interest, became united to an admiration of brilliant levity of morals, the best regulated sensibilities fell into disrepute, and the possession of wit atoned for the absence of every virtue. It became the fashion to live for pleasure, not for happiness. Society divided mankind into two classes, the knaves and the fools, and not many men were willing to be considered as belonging to the latter. For this cause morals became so relaxed, that domestic faith could not be relied on; and hence the attachments of the heart became a source of so much discord and uneasiness, that the moralists of that age had some reason in attributing the chief enjoyments of life to paternal rather than to conjugal affection. In such a society the sentiment of love, so far from yielding an all-satisfying joy to the heart, was seldom or never felt in its true character. Even Marmontel, who paints to the life the fascinations of the literary society of Paris at that time, admits that he never knew the real sentiment of love till he was fifty-five years of age—"jusque la le plaisir des sens avait été le seul attrait qui m'eut conduit."*

But it is scarcely necessary to multiply proofs of the agency of the court in corrupting the morals of the Parisians. From the time of Francis I. to that of Louis XIV. the military art occupied almost entirely the lives of the great, and gave to their characters that dash of heroic energy which was so admirable in a Bayard, a Henry, or a Condè. But after the noblesse abandoned their estates in the provinces, to come to reside in the capital, without becoming a branch of the government, they soon began to lose their mental as well as bodily activity. Being possessed of little talent and too much pride to devote themselves to study or any liberal profession, they spent their lives in adjusting the fripperies of fashion-in the petty bustles of scandalous intrigues, or in acquiring a knowledge of the anecdotes of the court. Hence, to prattle flippantly on trifles, became an accomplishment of much greater importance than the possession of real knowledge; and hence the French nobility which Louis XIV. found in the beginning of his reign prone to violent dissipation, settled down, during the course of it into a state of quiet corruption.

It was the policy of Louis XV. from an impression that the easiest of all arts was that of governing, to keep the mind of his successor Louis XVI. perfectly free both from the study of thetheory of government, and the practice of its administration. The vicious education of the young prince however could never

* Memoirs, Vol. iii. p. 179.

inspire him with a contempt of decency, nor subdue his respect for virtue. The natural moderation of his character was heightened by a diffidence in his own abilities, and a little proneness to melancholy arising perhaps from a perception of the immoral condition of the people he was to govern; or of the profligate degeneracy of the monarch he was destined to succeed. Such indeed was the old king's forgetfulness of propriety that the first evening after the marriage of the Dauphiness (the unfortunate Marie Antoinette,) he invited her to sup with him in the Chateau of Muette, and admitted the notorious Madame du Barry to the banquet.

At the death of Louis XV. the French government seemed ready to expire from excess of debility. To his successor he left a corrupt court, a bankrupt treasury, and the dying embers of a burnt out religion. All classes of society vied with each other in expressions of contempt and dissatisfaction at the existing state of things. The nobles wanted political power; the high clergy desired an increase of influence;—the parliaments were not satisfied with mere judicial powers, and the rest of the nation, its merchants, bankers, officers, freeholders, and authors, were all vexed to see talent governing England, whilst birth and favors ruled every thing in France. The desire of change was universal—"all conversation and action," says Madame de Stael, "all virtue and passion, public spirit and fashion tended equally to the same end."

The abolition alone of the order of Jesuits, by exposing the constitution by which that society had aimed at obtaining the government of the world, might, independent of any general propensity to scepticism in the nation at large, have shaken the foundations of the system of religion which then prevailed in France. Their mysterious creed which had been hitherto withheld even from the inspection of kings, was now handled with severity by philosophers and critics who in their rage were not very solicitous to screen other religious corporations from the shower of sarcastic virulence with which they were delighted to drench the Jesuits.

Another cause of disorder in France, about twenty years before the revolution, was the disposition of courtiers to imitate the heedless extravagance of the king, to build fine houses, and cover themselves with debt. Prodigality and ostentation every where prevailed, and new exactions on the tenantry followed of course. But the poverty of these, from bad husbandry, restricted commerce, and much oppression made them unable to meet new demands. The removal of the restriction on the free transportation of grain from one province to another, and its exportation when it fell below a certain price, which did not take place till after the death of De Pompadour, gave, it is true, a little breath to the industry of France; but at that time, it was only in Alsace and Flanders, acquisitions of Louis XIV. that the art of rendering the cultivation of the soil subservient to its amelioration, was at all understood.* The folly of the government in discouraging agriculture by injudicious restrictions, was seconded by the church, by the multiplication of holidays. There were no less than thirty Saints'-days on which labour was suspended. Now, estimating the number of labouring persons in France at twelve millions, and the value of their work at only ten cents a day, the loss to the nation, in a year, would amount to thirty-six millions of dollars; and in the century which elapsed between the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and the revolution. to a sum nearly equal to the present national debt of Great Britain. What heightened the evil was, a power vested in the curate of a parish, not only to enforce the observance of these holidays, but occasionally to increase their number; and as he was sometimes at law with his flock, he thus held a rod of chastisement in his hand, and could nearly command idleness at pleasure. In consequence of the number of these holidays, the necessities of the people often obliged them to work on Sundays, and hence the little observance of the Sabbath in many parts of Independent of the pecuniary loss the nation sustained France. by those holidays, its morals were injured by idleness: for when the plough was stopped, dissipation flourished; when factories and shops were shut up, operas and theatres were open, and although it was a mortal sin to weave a yard of cloth, it was a venial pleasure to view scenes which reconciled the mind to sensuality. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the rural economy of France was far inferior to that of England, Holland, or Switzerland; or that the gentlemen of France, who

* See Arthur Young.

travelled abroad during the period to which I allude, should have been suddenly seized with a passionate admiration of the systems of those countries.

There are a few other facts which I cannot refrain from mentioning, since they will enable you to judge of the excellence of those good old times. The quantity of meat produced in France . fifty years ago, was not, it is admitted by Voltaire, sufficient, if divided among the nation, to afford four pounds a piece a month, so that when the profusion of the rich was supplied, the lent of the peasant might well be said to last all the year. The use of eggs and milk was forbidden at the discretion of a bishop, who, in the enjoyment of a rich revenue, might wallow in luxury without disturbing himself by examining his diocese. "Dans plusieurs de nos provinces," says Voltaire, "il n'est pas permis de manger des œufs; dans d'autres le fromage meme est defendu!"

Before the administration of Turgot, meat was sold, during lent, only at the great hospital in Paris, which extorted, in consequence of the monopoly, a price that almost created a famine among the common people. In suggesting the injury which France sustained from the corrupt union of the tyrannies of church and state, I would by no means be understood to assert that this decay of morals was the necessary consequence of the prevalence of the Catholic religion. Look at this church as it exists in America, where unaided by the secular power, it is left to stand or fall by the doctrines it inculcates, and the virtues it practises. How benign is its spirit, and how amiable its disciples! Whence arises then the divorce between religion and morality in Spain, Portugal, or Italy, and formerly in France? Is it not that liberty of conscience sweetens and purifies all the duties of life, and that intolerance blackens and corrupts them?

The speculations of the economists,* who overthrew the restrictive system of political economy in France about the end of the reign of Louis XV. originated a vague conception of liberty throughout the nation. The discovery that the active agency of government served in many cases rather to retard than to accelerate the march of national industry, led to the doctrine of leaving things to themselves, which was soon after so ably expounded by Adam Smith, and which still continues to do so

* Gournai, Du Quesney, Turgot, &c.

much service to the cause of liberty all over the world. The abolition of some of the restrictions of the old feudal tyranny, seemed to infuse new life and action into the languid pulse of France, and served also to turn into disrepute those empirical regulations of monopolies, prohibitions and concessions by which governments, in attempting to heighten the prosperity of nations, had actually aggravated their misfortunes. These discoveries necessarily loosened the foundations of the old feudal edifices. When men saw that agriculture, as well as commerce and manufactures flourished best when individuals were left at liberty to pursue them at pleasure, they were inspired, of course, with a contempt for the restrictive system. Even the court began to conjecture that the best way of fortifying the throne, and avoiding that fear of change "which perplexes monarchs," was to rid the government of the practice of perpetually intermeddling in private affairs. They seem never to have suspected that the doing away with most of the business of government might give to the office of their king the appearance of a sinecure, and that a wish to abolish it might grow out of a general impression of its inutility.

Louis XVI. who was a man of most excellent dispositions soon manifested an inclination to restrain the licentiousness of his court. Without wishing to display the severity of a public censor, he hoped to see the veil of decency thrown over the amours of the profligate, and passion once more restored to its union with sentiment. But luxury which had been brilliant and graceful under Louis XIV. had become gross and vulgar under his successor. Those embers of virtue which education and the contagion of example could not extinguish, had become nearly quenched by showers of wit and ridicule. Yet although depravity was very general it was by no means universal. Persons of the soundest principles and most immaculate virtue no doubt abounded among this brilliant and delightful people; but to them the avenues of favour were of difficult access, and therefore they generally lived in a state of modest retirement. The king would have been glad to have selected his pilots from this class of his subjects, and it was, perhaps, a sentiment of modesty that guided him in the selection of his first minister.

Monsieur de Maurepas, who, now at near four score, fancied himself wise because he had been a minister at fifteen, was drawn from a retreat in which he had been sighing after the sumptuous indulgences of the court for forty years, and was placed at the head of the government. The facility with which Louis resigned himself to the guidance of this political antiquarian and most frivolous of courtiers is to be deplored. An excess of vanity was Maurepas' predominant foible, and sometimes led him to do good as in the recal of the parliament of Paris directly from its exile, not because it had meritoriously opposed the abuses of the preceding reign, but because so popular an act would gratify his love of praise. Public opinion had likewise fixed on Turgot and Malesherbes as the only men in the nation fit to remedy the disorders of the treasury and reform the administration of government. Though no statesman in France lagged farther behind on the march of public intelligence, or was less aware of the discoveries which the vioneers had made than that vieux enfant, yet from an amiable ambition to please, he resolved to introduce these two philosophers into the ministry. Their first propositions opened a beautiful perspective to France. They proposed the abolition of all intolerance in matters of religion; of the lettres de Cachet; the censorship of the press; of the Corvee, an odious and burthensome labour; and of the duties which restrained the free transportation of articles from one part of France to another. These regulations were so consonant with reason that they would probably have excited but little opposition, if they had not been accompanied by a proposition now become indispensibly requisite for the support of public credit, the abolition of the privilege which exempted the estates of the nobles and the clergy from taxation. Had those measures prevailed, the revolution in France might have been gradual and salutary. When a political reform is necessary in a state, those are the best friends of existing institutions, who wish to adopt it before the evil becomes too inveterate for ordinary remedies. A spirit of discontent created by actual and increasing grievances, can be quieted only by their removal. To repress the clamour it produces by mere force, is like stopping the leaks of a dammed up torrentramong the Alps-it only

ping the leaks of a dammed up torrentramong the Alps-it only serves to accumulate waters, and if, when they break loose, the mountains are torn asunder and the vallies ruined, to what but the folly of heaping them up, are we to attribute the devastation?

As the demands of the treasury were now much greater than its resources, there was no choice left, but to tax the privileged orders, to curtail the expenditure, or to acquire new credit. The avarice of the nobles and clergy who governed the court, prevented the experiment of the two former, and the darkness in which the fiscal operations were involved rendered the last impossible. The king himself was somewhat inclined to favour a reformation; and had he been wise enough to perceive the extent to which it should have been carried, and bold enough to discard the dread of innovation, he might perhaps have reigned happily, and been a blessing to his people. But he was of a different nature, and before the joy of the public, at the appointment of Turgot and Malesherbes, was over, he roused its indignation by discarding them. Their plans of relief put the privileged orders in a rage, and the parliament of Paris, forgetting its old quarrels with them, concurred in their displeasure. The first outcry was raised against a trifling tax on the privileged classes for the repair of the highways, which, as internal trade had never been brisk in France, had hitherto served principally to facilitate the movements of armies, and the occasional journeys of the rich; for travelling is always rare in despotical states. Even at present a stranger is struck with the languid circulation of the public, and the few equipages on the roads in France in comparison with England, or the northern states of America. do not believe that in our journey to Italy last year we met be-tween Paris and Lyons, a distance of near three hundred miles, more than a dozen carriages travelling post-not one with private horses, nor perhaps one gentleman on horseback. The removal of Turgot caused the public to perceive, that its

The removal of Turgot caused the public to perceive, that its interest was in one scale, and that of the privileged orders in the other; but the appointment of Mr. Neckar, as director general of finance, somewhat allayed their discontent. Neckar's understanding was extensive and just, but it was a little fettered by habits of business, and liable to an indecision, which his accomplished daughter has so amiably attributed to the comprehensiveness of his views. His system of finance was that of Colbert, enlarged and liberalized; as that of Turgot was an im-

provement on the plans of Sully. To great caution and discretion of temper, Neckar united a scrupulous regard to the dictates of conscience, so that his whole conduct may be regarded as a compromise between the enlightened perceptions of his mind, and the dutiful restraints of his heart. He was a sort of mediator between the republican philosophers, and the friends of feudal bondage, and as such continued during five years the labours of a zealous patriot. In that time he repaired the system of finance, so that it might go on a few years without him, and he was, therefore, sacrificed in his turn, to the trifling vanity of old Maurepas. His genius infused some little vigour into the government during the American war; and this war, to which some have attributed the French revolution, probably retarded its explosion. For, whoever looks attentively into the history of France, will find, I think, that the peace of '63 had humiliated the superb vanity of this nation-that the ignominious vices of Louis XV. had at his death nearly destroyed all reverence for the crown-that the moral bonds, which hold society together, were so chafed or worn, that they were ready to give way or fall to pieces on the first occasion-and that the prodigality which had beggared the treasury, had so increased the impositions, which galled the nation, that it continued to submit more from the habit of obedience, than from any attachment to its government,

LETTER V.

Paris, Feb. 20th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

I have endeavoured in my last letter to recal to your recollection that conduct of the court of France, by which, after familiarizing the nation with the image of vice, it broke down those springs of opinion which had hitherto supported the government. Yet I cannot help thinking that if Louis XVI. (as he was seemingly disposed to do in the beginning of his reign) had suffered himself to be quietly borne along on the tide of public opinion, which was then setting with a smooth and steady current towards civil and religious liberty, he might have avoided the wreck which became inevitable after the waters had been too long pent up by the idle and temporary obstacles which bigotry and prejudice opposed to them. The course of the revolution by being slow and gentle might have been salutary and untroubled. But it is often the misfortune of kings to be behind the rest o mankind in wisdom as well as virtue. Louis had excellent feelings but wanted talent to see farther than those who surrounded him, and the natural benevolence of his temper heightens the regret we feel in seeing him perpetually the bubble of his court when so many dangers and troubles were gathering around him. Guided at one time by his own opinions, and at another by those of his counsellors, his conduct was wavering and irresolute when every vacillation of policy jarred the foundations of his throne. and added to the pile of combustible material which perseverance in error had heaped up around it. A match was almost ready to be applied to these after the dismissal of Turgot in 1776. The repeal of the stamp act by appeasing the dissatisfaction of the public retarded for ten years the American revolution. The appointment of Mr. Neckar and the declaration of war against England in alliance with America probably arrested the break-

ing out of that of France by diverting the public attention from domestic grevances, and flattering the national vanity with the prospect of recovering the glory which had been recently lost. The American revolution, however, by retarding that of France might have aggravated its disasters. By presenting too a successful example of political reform it unquestionably heightened the illusions of theoretical philosophy, and led away the imaginations of the sanguine and extravagant. It was hastily concluded that an old nation required no preparation for the best of governments, and that intelligence alone, without a high sense of justice in the public mind, was all that was necessary for the preservation of freedom. The aversion from arbitrary measures which was now growing apace in this country was increased by the return of the army that went to America. The soldiers brought back with them the impressions that are inspired by the action of a mild and beneficent government, which ruled without oppression and controlled without tyranny. The officers too who commanded that expedition were men at that time of life in which the imagination and the heart are most susceptible of a passion for liberty. The sublime simplicity of Washington's manners and the noble plainness of his retinue presented such a contrast to the languid pomp and frivolous splendour of the spectacle they were accustomed to behold at Versailles as weaned their fondness from pageantry. The French people also turned their regards on the events of that war, and were pleased with the novelty of fighting for liberty. With that vivacity of imagination which is so peculiarly theirs, they ran into an excessive admiration of freedom-began to contemplate their past history as humiliating to their national pride, and to find pleasure only in anticipating its future scenes, brightened and enlarged by the embellishments of vanity. A sort of affectation of independence and audacious contempt of the absurdities sanctioned by time, began to prevail

at court, whilst a diminution of respect for the privileges of birth destroyed the elasticity of the main spring of monarchy. Schemes of speculative philosophy which prior to the American war were confined to literary men, began afterwards to circulate in all societies. The rage of the day was to yield with enthusiasm to sentiments of universal benevolence, and to abandon without scruple the discharge of domestic duties. The principles of general philanthropy were pushed so far, that books were written to shew that private affection was a folly and gratitude a crime. Thus brilliant imaginations in the pursuit of the phantom of heroical virtue trod down the realities of life and the obligations of nature. Sensible men might have perceived those changes, but it was not their business to sound the trumpet of alarm against principles of innovation, some of which they approved. Among the nobles, whose chief pride was a long line of uncertain ancestors, there was scarcely talent enough to foresee the consequences of the new mode of thinking. An exquisite refinement of manners was their chief accomplishment, and they lived on, contented with filling the void of sense by the gestures of refinement.

Historians assert, that during the American war the frivolity of fashionable life was so great in Paris, that for a time the city was divided into two parties, most rancorously hostile to each other, on the relative merits of the two musicians, Gluck and Macini. But as many of the noblesse possessed the companionable qualities in the highest degree, and it was their peculiar privilege to associate with the royal family, they had every opportunity of deluding them. The king was fond of retirement and study, but the queen had a taste for brilliant society, and formed a gay circle around her, in which matters of the weightiest importance were lightly discussed, and hastily resolved on. There was so little frankness among these courtiers, that Doctor Franklin is said, on being asked what he thought of their sincerity, to have observed, "none of them speak truth, from the Duke of Vergennes down to my valet de chambre " Indeed, so little importance did they attach to words, that Noailles carried his politeness so far, in announcing to the cabinet of St. James, the resolution of his court to acknowledge the independence of America, as to observe, that he did not doubt but that his Britannic majesty would regard that act as an unequivocal evidence of the friendly dispositions of his Most Christian Majesty! Such were the moral sentiments of a country in which Mr. Burke would have us believe all was purity and bliss before the revolution broke down the barriers of virtue. To me, I confess, it appears that Mr. Flood was much nearer the truth, when he said, they did not begin with reparation in France, for there was nothing to repair; nor did they begin with ruin, for they found ruin accomplished at their hands. The only fair motive for admiring such a state of society, was that of the Emperor Joseph II. who, on being asked by a princess, in Paris, what he thought of the patriotism of the American militia, replied, "Eh! Mais, Madame, mon metièr à moi est d'etre royaliste." The very simplicity itself with which this Emperor travelled, put the French out of conceit of the ostentation with which their monarchs moved. Even at this day the king of France never takes his "promenade en voiture," without two coaches and eight, with fifty or an hundred horsemen clattering after him.

The political horizon of France shewed many indications of a storm before the assembling of the states general. The admiration of England was, as I have already hinted, one of these. It was the rumbling of distant thunder, and ought to have opened the eyes of the Court. Men love to copy what they most admire; and travellers were then in the habit of returning, so captivated with the institutions of England, as to declare, says Lacretelle, "que la France etoit peu avancée dans sa civilization." Madame de Stael, too, in the course of her beautiful reflections on the French revolution, confirms this statement, and says that her father was particularly impressed with the superiority of the British institutions; but that he considered it out of the sphere of his duty to propose their adoption. Now I must confess, I think Mr. Neckar was over scrupulously delicate in this particular, and that nothing but his peculiar situation (as a Protestant and Plebeian minister,) justified his silence. There was a hesitancy in this good man's character, which prevented his taking time by the forelock; and he had such a conviction of the uniform rectitude of public sentiment, and of his own capacity to govern it, that he never dreaded the storm before it was up, nor perceived, till then, his inability to ride on and direct it. Yet who ever read his own numeration of the difficulties by which he was constantly beset during his association with Maurepas-the host of antiquated prejudices which he went forward with fear and trembling, every day to combat, without feeling a noble respect for the benevolence of the man who thus sacrificed all the peace and comfort of his life, to improve the condition of his country?

It is asserted by Rousseau,* that perhaps nothing was wanting

* Vol. 25, p. 81. Edition 1793.

۹

but leaders of credit to have excited a civil war in France, during the publication of the *Encyclopédie*; and there is scarcely a doubt that a revolution would have taken place in 1770, when Louis XV. disgraced Choiseul, and threw twenty thousand beads of families into despair and ruin, by suppressing the parliament of Paris, if that minister had touched the people with half the internat he excited among the noblesse. The cup of provocation was then full, but the public were yet ignorant of their power to break it. But since the revolution was inevitable—since every obstacle that delayed it only served to wind up the spring of passion to a higher pitch, and let it off at last with a more destructive velocity, who is there that would not have been better satisfied if this had happened when the glutton of debauchery filled the throne, than that it should have been left, to raise the guillotine on his amiable and benevolent successor.

The common people, at that time, were more sensible of the vexatious oppressions of the nobles, than of the burthensome weight of the crown. The extravagance of the former had condemned their tenantry to misery, whilst the comparative industry and frugality of the intermediate classes, having raised them to a condition of easy opulence, made them impatient at the privileges of a set of men, whose personal merit they regarded as in no manner superior to their own. They could not see without dissatisfaction, all preferments lavished on the nobly born, whilst plebeian worth and genius were condemned, without appeal, to obscurity and neglect. This was the germ of jealousy between high church and low church, between officers of grade, and officers of exclusion, which afterwards grew into a sanguinary rage for equality. Nor did the encreasing hostility to exclusive privileges lose any occasion of shewing itself. The manner in which the city of Paris was, for more than one hundred nights together, attracted to the theatre, and fascinated by the marriage of Figaro, a play written expressly to ridicule the privileges which certain classes enjoyed, for taking the trouble "to be born," might have afforded them no unequivocal presage of their own destiny. But they heedlessly danced along to the brink of the precipice, without seeming ever to have perceived that the legal and political organization of France, of which they formed so conspicuous a part, fell entirely short of the

wints and necessities of a people enlightened by the discoveries of the eighteenth century.

The disastrous and disgraceful bankruptcy of prince Rohan, and the suspected purloining of the queen's necklace by a Cardinal of the same name, in collusion with the Comtesse La Mothe, served also to diminish the respect of the people for the nobles. The ruddy countenances of the ecclesiastics, indicating an excess of voluptuousness and sensuality in a body pretending to great humility and self denial, created vehement murmurings at their overgrown wealth, whilst the long wranglings between the kings and parliaments had brought to Kight such scenes of bigotry and imbecility, as might have discredited, in the eyes of the nation, the constitution of any state. In truth, the criminal jurisprudence of France had been long fun-In a country where juries were unknown, damentally vicious. the power of life and death over the subject was confided to arbitrary judges, whose consciences, hardened by the habitual exercise of tyranny, did not scruple, (as in the cases of Montbailli and Sirvens, and many others,) to condemn innocent individuals, suspected only by the voice of rumour. The French nation, though proud of its progress in civilization, retained the practice of torture, not only in punishing offences, but in extorting confession. Its public jails were seemingly contrived for the propagation, rather than the suppression of vice; and its hospitals administered in a manner shocking to humanity. We are told, that the amiable and heroic Madame Neckar, the female Howard of France, was, during the administration of her husband, in the daily habit of visiting the hospitals and prisons of Paris, and that in the exercise of this beautiful philanthropy, she brought to light such odious scenes of disorder and neglect. as disgusted the public feelings, and excited universal indignation against those connected with the administration of these establishments. I have rejoiced to find the memory of the reform produced by this inquiry of Madame Neckar, still cherished in France. When the Jacobins drove her and her husband together out of the kingdom, she left the reputation of this good action behind her, as an angel might have dropped a mantle of light in his passage through the air. Nor are noble imitations of this devotion to public good at all wanting in the course of

the revolution which followed. On the contrary, no nation ever exhibited sublimer instances of individual merit, and self immolation on the altar of social and public good. In speaking of its general corruption, you are never to understand me as meaning more than a depraved majority which stood in need of ablution. We are told, in the Old Testament, that a city might have been spared from destruction, if five righteous souls could have been found in it-many thousand redeeming spirits were found in France, and they will multiply, I trust, till they lead her outof danger, Look, however, to the examples to which I allude, Are they to be found among the cringing creatures of legitimacy -the finical preachers of divine right and passive obedience? Are they to be found among those sanguinary Jacobins, who plunged up to their very necks in blood? or are they to be found smong the friends of a mild and rational liberty? Among those who, when the power of the crown was arbitrary, were repulsed from court, and derided as republicans, but who were the only men that had courage to rally in support of it against the assaults of the ferocious Jacobins of '93, when the weapons of attack had not only dropped from its hand, but the armour of defence was failen from around it. In that season of trial and adversity, when the carrion birds of Jacobinism collected in Paris to feed on human flesh; when none but such men as La Fayette and Malesherbes were found firm on the post of honor, where was then to be found the flock of jackdaw courtiers who had hovered and chattered so flercely around the king, when he held the horn of fortune in his hand?-But I feel that I am running before my subject, and that some other proofs are yet necessary to explain how completely the spirit of liberty is free from the crimes of the French revolution; and how equally justifiable it would be to condemn the principles of agriculture for the weeds which might destroy the first crop on a new and upprepared field.

France could not look around on the condition of her neighbours without encouragement to seek freedom. She was most centrally situated too for observation. Her northern frontier was scarcely separated from Holland, whose prosperity dated itself from the establishment of free institutions—and among the states of Germany each appeared happy and flourishing in proportion to the liberality of its government. Touching Switzerland on the east, she had occasion to observe a sterile soil, in the hands of freemen, become more fertile than her own productive plains. Italy herself, with all her lessons of freedom, was not remote from her. Even if the history of the Romans could have been forgotten, was there no contrast between the splendid activity of her little republics in the middle ages, and the sleep of despotism into which they were now fallen? There the country of Rome, once the most magnificent and delicious region of the earth, had become, after eighteen hundred years of despotism, the most melancholy district of the world. There, like that rock at Megara on which Apollo laid his lyre, and which ever after sent forth a melodious sound, even when galled by a chain, or chafed by a pebble, the vales of Tuscany, and the plains of Lombardy, still flourished under the remains and memory of that good old system of cultivation which freedom had created.

In Spain, too, might she not have beheld some of the richest fields of Europe lying waste and desolate under the protection of the inquisition? But though all these had been lost on her, might not the rivalship and proximity of England alone have awakened her ambition? To what was the unparalleled greatness of this people to be attributed? How did it happen, that so small a country should almost violate the laws of nature by an ascendancy in arms, as well as in prosperity over countries blessed infinitely beyond it in climate and in soil?

France abounded too, at this time, in thinking and intelligent men, who, although they lacked political experience, carried their inquiries far and wide into the province of government. They were naturally led to ask, why a people like the French chivalrous in the field and polished at home, should be subjected to restrictions, from which their neighbours had been a century exempted? Why a nation, whose career in literature and science was marked by a brilliancy commensurate at least with the lights of England, should be burthened with gothic institutions which reason condemned, and time only sanctioned as legitimate? Unhappily, however, for France, all classes did not march simultaneously towards the goal which imagination and reason would have substituted in the place of existing institutions. Hence, it happened, that when the rational part of the nation began the work of revolution, they found all their plans of reform counteracted by a disciplined corps of nobles and religionists, whose clamours and machinations they could not put down, without calling to their own aid a rabble of ignorant and miserable peasants. Melancholy indeed, must be always the condition of wisdom, when she is forced into an alliance with ignorance. So it proved on this occasion. The peasantry felt their chains, and were willing to break them at any price; and

when they had done so, they rushed into the light of liberty with such rashness, that their weak eyes were blinded by excess of glory, and they fell into ruin from mistaking equality for freeclom, and rapine for justice.

LETTER VI,

Paris, Feb. 25th, 1820.

My BEAR SIR,

Before the revolution, the government of France was administered by an arbitrary monarch, assisted by three great corporations, the church, the noblesse, and the parliaments. The greater part of the land in the kingdom had fallen into the hands of the two former in consequence of their exemption from taxation. The Church, independent of its immense possessions, was in the enjoyment of the fifth part of the nett product of the territorial revenue of the state.* They had accumulated this wealth by practising on the hopes and fears of the superstitious; and such was the absorbing nature of the ecclesiastical gulph that no property which entered it, ever got out again. The celibacy of the priests, the monks, and the nuns, cut them off from those sympathies on which conjugal and parental happiness depend; whilst their luxury relaxed the sense of their duties, and gave them the appearance of drones feeding on the honey of a hive which they never assisted in filling. The decline of reverence for monastic institutions was followed by a general impression, that the immense sums appropriated to their support might be better applied in relieving the wants of the squalid wretches that haunted the streets of every town in France, than in creating asylums for such of the younger children of the noblesse as it might suit their vanity or their tyranny to condemn to a lazy imprisonment.

The power of the noblesse consisted of rights over their tenantry, and of influence at court. It was necessary to have belonged to that class a hundred years in order to be allowed the honour of defending France as an officer, and four hundred to be admitted at court. Thus the distinction of an ancestor who had

* Precis de la Revolution, Vol. i. p. 8.

been dead a thousand years was a higher merit than the possession of either virtue or talent; and Lord Bacon's maxim that "they who reverence too much old times, are but a scorn to the new," became verified. But the French nobility were brave, chivalrous, and hospitable; for such is the paradoxical mercurialism of the French character, that laxity of morals does not abate its courage, nor deprave many of the finer feelings of the heart. This is the only people, I believe, which was ever fierce in the bosom of voluptuousness, or who could decorate so beautifully with garlands the temple of vice as to conceal its deformities.----Hence the justness of Mr. Burke's eulogium, that in Paris vice Iost half its evil by losing all its grossness.

The judicial aristocracy of France consisted of about a dozen provincial parliaments, whose abuses were perhaps the most incorrigible of all, because an occasional refusal to register the edicts of the court had given them the semblance of popular bodies. They were small corporations uniting to a temper as arbitrary as the laws they administered, a ridiculous vanity of newly acquired honours, and that obsequious veneration of rank which characterizes upstarts. They were courts in which judges might purchase seats, and therefore seek reimbursement by the sale of their decisions. They had once ordered an annual thanksgiving for the massacre of St. Barthélemi, and had never been squeamish in shedding blood. Nor was such corruption remarkable, for venality had crept into every thing. "Quid leges ine moribus, vanse proficiunt?"* The mere right of exercising a trade was an object of sale, and industry was every where chained by monopolies. These exclusive privileges, which are nothing more than legitimated robberies on society, are said to have amounted to more than three hundred thousand at the beginning of the revolution. United to heavy rents and taxes, they kept the peasants in extreme poverty. The Corvée, too, might sacrifice the labourer's little harvest, by calling his family at any season three or four leagues from home to repair highways, which were three times as wide as those of the Romans-and the Gabelle almost deprived the people of the use of salt. But these grievances were endless----- "France," says Madame de Stael, "has been governed by customs, fre-

* Mor. Ode xxiv. 1, 35 and 86.

quently by caprice, and never b. laws." If, under such a government, the nobles become courtiers, the clergy hypocrites, and the people slaves, is there any strong reason for the latter to wish to preserve it. But independent of the moral distemper engendered by bad government, and which was preying on the vitals of the state, the revenue, which braces if it does not constitute its nerves, was wanting to hold it together. M. De Calonne admits, I think, in his apology, that when he advised the assembling the Notables, in 1787, the deficit of the revenue amounted to more than one hundred millions of livres, or twenty millions of dol-To prevent the fall of the monarchy, under such circumlars. stances, must have been difficult, but after the king left it to be supported by the sparkling levity of the prattling Calonne, and the indiscrimate rashness and sickly wavering of Brienne, it was next to impossible. Besides, the old edifice was now out of fashion-nobody liked it-and so violent was the spirit of reform, that slight reparations would not have been sufficient. Men of letters combined with the rabble in condemning it; and thus literature and oppression may be said to have scattered principles of liberty and discontent abread over the land; and, like dragon's teeth, wherever they had fallen, armed men were ready to spring up.

In this state of things, a mere suggestion of the expediency of calling the states general, was received in the parliament of Paris with a vociferation of applause; and the resoundings of this enthusiasm were echoed back from every corner of the kingdom. A wise prince, on hearing these reverberations, might have foreseen a tempest, and instead of resolving to await the dissolution of the storm, might have taken measures to allay it. The immediate adoption of a free constitution of government might have done this; but Louis XVI. like many good Frenchmen, was incapable of comprehending the advantages of a free government; and as he fancied it his duty to transmit, unimpaired, to his posterity, the prerogatives of his crown, he stood still, until what he ought to have granted was torn from him. His ministers did not feel themselves authorised to enlighten him on this subject, and when the public clamour for reform was loud, and when loss of time was the loss of every thing, he fell into a state of inertness, and stupefaction. Nothing could have been more unfortunate

for him. The perils which surrounded him were not to be dissipated by petty expedients-yet, when his treasury was empty, and when an universal murmur followed the publication of every royal edict, he expected to fill the one, and to silence the other by the aid of a frivolous archbishop, who in turn imagined, that a great nation might be awed into submission by the arrest of two members of the parliament of Paris, or of a few gentlemen in Brittany for remonstrating against the causes of the national grievances. "If time," says the father of modern philosophy, "shall alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?" Whether it was then too late for alteration or not, is a question which can never be determined. But one thing is clear-the king conceded every point reluctantly, and never once recollected, that "a froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation "*

The French are a people who embrace novelties with infinite animation; and many discoveries in the arts and sciences occurred about that time to excite the imagination. Even air balloons and animal magnetism came in opportunely to heighten the delirium, which went on increasing, until it became fashionable to believe any thing, except what had been believed in the preceding age. Discontent with arbitrary government, without any just comprehension of liberty, gained ground every day, until, at last, among Louis's subjects, all became republicans in opinion, but none in practice.

Before I came to this country, and when I was in the habit of looking at it, either through the fine kaleidescope of Mr. Burke's imagination, or through the shadowing prism of its late overwhelming calamities, I was, I confess, of opinion, that the abuses of the old regime might have been remedied without a violent rupture; that Louis XVI. by uniting some boldness to discretion in granting the nation a charter, might have satisfied it, and availed himself of the advantage which Mr. Fox ascribed to voluntary givers in general, that of commanding the limits of what they give, and fixing the qualifications of the gift. But a nearer observation of the character of this people, and a recollection of

> * Bacon. 18

the deplorable condition in which they then were, have led me to doubt the justness of that conclusion. The French embrace a favourite project with so much vivacity, that they seldom fail to overleap the bounds of reason in pursuing it. Now, independent of the enthusiasm for liberty with which circumstances had then inspired them; there was such a multitude of grievances to be redressed, and such an immense swarm of persons of influence, whose interests were opposed to any change, and on whom every suggestion of reform acted, like Satan's sword on his host of rebel angels, in calling them up with a resolution, "never to submit or yield," that one may reasonably doubt whether any revolution could have been tranquilly accomplished, or indeed accomplished at all, without the levelling of all distinctions and authorities.

That the assembling of the States General was embraced as a mere temporary expedient, and that it was not intended to effect any radical change in the form of government, is evident, I think, from various circumstances, and among others, from the organization of that body not having been previously determined on. Instead of this, Brienne gave it out as a question to be publickly discussed, and thus stirred up a fermentation in the public mind by the sudden agitation of all manner of whimsical projects and extravagant theories. The king himself seems to have had no settled ideas on the subject, and to have taken no precautions against the dissensions which it might have been foreseen would arise among such a corps of undisciplined politicians. Perhaps he entertained the vain imagination of triumphing more easily over an assembly split into factions by the virulence of party feeling, or fancied that the rage of intestine divisions might prevent the assembly from melting into union, when the power of the crown threatened it with dissolution.

When the funds in the treasury were reduced to two hundred and fifty thousand livres, (fifty thousand dollars,) and the incapacity of Brienne become notorious, the king reluctantly yielded to the necessity of recalling Mr. Neckar from exile to re-occupy the place from which he had been expelled about seven years before. This minister, if not a skilful architect, was unquestionably the best repairer of those times, and if he had not been originally driven from his station, he might have so patched up the vessel of state as to enable her to ride out some years longer; but he now found her joints so worn and cracked by the dilapidations of time and the ravages of peculators, that there was no chance of holding her timbers together, if the slightest rough weather should happen to assail her. To retract the king's promise of assembling the States General was impossible, even if it had been consonant with the new minister's principles of policy, and therefore he has been chiefly censured for not having determined on the plan of the assembly and the mode of deliberation. Yet, we shall hereafter have occasion to perceive that there were circumstances which palliated, if they did not excuse his remissness. His judgment might have preferred two bodies, but policy might have dictated the temporary union of the three orders into one chamber. The augean stable wanted sweeping, and Mr. Neckar knew the selfishness of mankind,-he knew that the nobles hated him as an upstart, the clergy dreaded him as a heretic, and that the royal family disliked him on account of his republican simplicity and principles of reform.

His giving to the Commons a number of representatives equal . to those of the noblesse and clergy united, strengthened his popularity in the nation, and sharpened the hostility of the privileged orders. The imputation, however, which these afterwards threw out against him, of having, from the beginning, planned their ruin, and meditated the union of the three estates into one body, is so far from being supported by evidence, that it is contradicted by the very number of which the assembly itself was composed. Twelve hundred men cannot act together with convenience, or deliberate with wisdom. No matter how well so large a body may have been trained to parliamentary discipline, its acts will be influenced more by the gusts of passion, than by the impulses of reason. Now, it could never have entered into the contemplation of Mr. Neckar, whose object it was to modify, not to overthrow, to call together an intractable mob, whose angry dissentions must not only retard the administration of affairs, but hurl him from the seat it was his ambition to occupy. Nor could it ever have entered into his views, (even if he had not possessed the high benevolence and patriotism which characterized him,) to demolish a government in whose treasury he deposited one half of his private fortune. As events afterwards turned out, it might have been wiser to have formed an hereditary senate of not more than two hundred of the higher classes, and a house of commons of more than double that number. They might, in this case, have followed in their reformation the advice of the scripture, "and made a stand upon the ancient way, and then looked about them and discovered which was the straight and right way, and so to have walked in it." But to have formed such an assembly, was at that time utterly imprac-The whole court would have revolted at the suggestion ticable. of it. Those who were not included in the upper house, would have been in arms against it. The clergy had already shewn, at the assembly of the Notables, a wish to be considered as a body independent of the nation, enjoying a third of its revenues, but unwilling to contribute to its support. The noblesse were bent on retaining their privileges, and from inveterate jealousy of the rising respectability of the Tiers etat had already protested against its double representation, and would have never consented to an enlargement of it, nor to its forming alone one chamber, whilst the two upper orders formed but one. GOuorum superbiam frustra per obsequium et modestiam effugeres."* How then was the States General to be modelled? Why, after the obscure precedents of a remote antiquity which the court revered, and not after the dictates of common sense, which it despis-Time, therefore, was thrown away in ridiculous researches ed. into the records of French history; and all the court seemingly fell asleep over them, except the Comte de Provence, (the present king of France) who observed to the municipality of Paris, that "a revolution was at hand, and that the king, from his virtues, good intentions, and rank, should place himself at the head of it."

Unhappily, in the earlier periods of French history, the uncertainty of the rights of each order in the States General had destroyed the harmony of its deliberations, and caused that time which should have been devoted to public business to be wasted in the discussion of their respective privileges. If any sparks of patriotic zeal broke out among the commons, they were sure to be extinguished by the arrogant fatuity of the majority of the noblesse, or the hood-winking bigotry of that of the clergy. Philip

• Tacitus.

le Long had once wisely excluded the clergy from the States General, to prevent interfering with their ecclesiastical duties, but in its last meeting, after the death of Henry IV. they had formed a chamber by themselves. On the present occasion, as nothing more than relief from financial embarrassment was contemplated in convoking it; as the object of the king was probably to induce the higher orders to make some sacrifices for the public welfare, and as the habitual exercise of absolute power led him to the apprehension of no opposition from the commons, and to the belief of his power to dissolve them at will, he was induced to grant a double representation to the tiers etat with a view of increasing his own power. - This determination, and the recal of Mr. Neckar, which caused the funds to rise thirty per cent. in a day, had produced a general exhibiration throughout France, and considerably fortified the popularity of the king. The French are of an amiable and forgiving nature, and if all doubt of the sincerity of Louis in effecting a permanent reform could have been avoided, this popularity would have been much more lasting.

For a year or two before the assembling of the States General, conversation had assumed throughout France a more rational turn. It was never, we are told, embellished with so many charms, nor animated with so much wit as during this season of hope and joy. The asperity of party feeling had not yet discoloured it,---the spirit of philosophy had blown the foam of frivolity out of it, and the enthusiasm of imagination never suffered it to languish. Ladies took a lead, even on grave and serious topics, and la manie du bel-esprit became universal. Scandalous anecdotes were received with indifference, or the affectation of disdain, and pleasantries on religion fell into disuse because they had lost the charm of novelty. Every sparkle of wit, or flash of eloquence was hailed with rapture, as an indication of splendid powers of oratory, which on the assembling of the States General, might adorn the French language with productions such as those by which Fox and Pitt, and Sheridan and Burke, were every day extending the renown of Great Britain.

I think we are told by Lacretelle in his history, that under the reigns which preceded this of Louis XVI. scarcely more than twenty courtiers at a time ever manifested the talent or ambition of meddling in state affairs; but that this king was always beset by a crowd, who claimed that privilege with importunate eagerness. Under Louis XIV. the radiations of learning had not spread beyond the circumference of the higher circles of society, and therefore the others were content to be governed by those whom they considered wiser than themselves: but under his successors, instruction became diffused over a wider sphere, and nourished up to high intelligence many more capacities. Society however, was not so organized as to weld and consolidate the talents of the different classes together, but rather to throw them into opposition, and to endow them with that repelling nature which is observable in the similar poles of a magnet.

From the desire on the one part to maintain, and on the other to break down, those arbitrary distinctions which classed the French nation into two species of men, "des oppresseurs et des opprimes," arose that jealousy and discord which proved so fatal to the happiness of this country. The hostility of the commons to the privileged classes displayed itself very violently at the elections. A general burst of applause was excited, by even that eloquent address of Mirabeau, in which he declared, that privileges should end and the power of the people be eternal; in which he denounced the aristocrats as the implacable enemies of the nation; and after hinting at himself as the probable victim of their vengeance, because he had belonged to their order, he pointed out the prototype of his future conduct. "Ainsi perit le dernier des Gracques de la main des Patricièns; mais atteint d'un coup mortel il lança de la poussière vers le ciel en attestant les dieux vengeurs; et de cette poussiére naquit Marius; Marius moins grand pour avoir exterminé les Cimbres que pour avoir abattu dans Rome l'aristocratie de la noblesse."

Travelling was much less common formerly in France than at present, and therefore many members of the States General, in emerging suddenly from distant provinces, where they had lived familiar with scenes of distress and wretchedness, beheld, for the first time, the splendours of Versailles, and are said to have been offended by the contrast between the gorgeous pomp of the court and the penury of the nation. Nor do I think this at all extraordinary—for after spending a day in walking through the splendid apartments of these sumptuous palaces, and over the artificial hills and vallies of their magnificent gardens, I remember the impression they made on me, and the observation of an American gentleman who accompanied me—"It is time for me to return;" said he, "I left home a very rational republican these scenes have almost made me a democrat, and a few more might make me a jacobin." Now, in America, where there are no objects of beggary, or in England, where every thing breathes of opulence, scenes of this kind would be less striking than in France, where even yet the villages look like the filthy abodes of misery. Among the French peasantry, the first effect of competence has been to add to the internal comforts of their rooms; cleanliness and external embellishments have been, as yet, but little attended to, and, therefore, the appearance of the houses does not often correspond with the interior decorations.

At length, after many difficulties and delays, the States General met on the 5th of May, 1789. Never was national expectation more highly excited than on this occasion. It was a day of rejoicing and promise, on which hope stood on tiptoe in every mind. The sentiments of the public may be judged of, from the extraordinary unanimity of opinion which prevailed among the six hundred delegates of the Tiers Etat. They seem each to have gone to Versailles, with a resolution to assert their rights and to maintain them-to remember "que les prières du peuple sont des ordres-que ses doleances sont des loix."* I do not mean to say, that they met with the frenzied spirit of reform, which afterwards animated them, and which brought down the revolution like "the thundering lauwine" on France, but only that they assembled with the intention of achieving, if possible, a change in their constitution of government. The king perceived this, and observed to the assembly, that a general inquietude and rage for innovation had seized upon every mind; and yet the privileged orders had not sagacity enough to perceive that it would be wise to yield to day, that which would infallibly be torn from them to-morrow. When experienced seamen see a storm coming up, they slacken sail, brace up their yards, and lay the ship too, in order to drift with it. Nothing but folly or madness could suggest the hoisting of top-gallant sails and sky-sails under such circumstances. Yet this seems to have been the conduct of the French no-

* Discours de Boissy d'Anglas.

bles and clergy; for instead of a timely surrender of their feudal privileges they coalesced and conspired to preserve them, and to acquire political power also. These orders consisted, at that time, of about sixty thousand nobles, and one hundred thousand privileged persons*---of about two hundred thousand priests--and of sixty thousand monks, who had, it is true, renounced the temptations of the flesh and the world, but still meddled in its concerns. In this coalition to keep things as they were, may also be included a large class of government pensioners and office holders, who, living on the offal of the state, were the natural friends of that prodigality from which they derived their licences of peculation. This powerful combination could only be opposed successfully by the body of the nation. Hence, the most virtuous and enlightened men were driven into an offensive and defensive alliance with those, whom ignorance had debased, and oppression corrupted. This connexion, which nothing but the obdurate folly of the higher orders and the necessities of the times could have created, was in itself so unnatural and discordant, that great evil as well as great good must have grown out of it. Many of the nobility and clergy, however, deserve to be distinguished out of this general censure, for they displayed the noblest generosity and patriotism. But the majority acted with strange infatuation, in first exasperating the Commons by proud pretensions, and then driving them to madness by an obstinate adherence to their privileges. Nothing but the inveterate hostility of the cabal about the court against all reformation, could have induced the National Assembly to lay hold, like Sampson, on the pillars of the temple which sheltered their enemies, and to tumble it about their heads, even though they themselves might perish under its ruins.

* Precis de la Revolution.

LETTER VII.

Paris, March 2d, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

R

ŝ

ł

. To the bright and brilliant Aurora of '89, succeeded a cloudy morning and the thunders of a stormy day. The sun of liberty made violent emissions of his rays it is true, but the clouds of folly continued to boil up from every side of the horizon till the year of '93, when they closed in, in such heavy masses as to shut out his light entirely from France, and to cover this land for a time with the darkness of despotism and the horrors of anarchy. It is not my intention, however, at present, to lead you through all the windings of the labyrinth of error in which the parties of the revolution lost themselves, and for the want of the illumination of virtue and experience, mistook the slaughter house of faction for the temple of liberty. I only wish to shew you that the lights which led them into these entanglements were not the stars of freedom, but those meteoric illusions which rise from the fenny grounds of despotism and float about in the atmosphere of ignorance.

One of the most melancholy consequences of the French revolution in Europe, is the disposition of mind it has left to mistake impatience under oppression for a love of insubordination. No nation can now ask a redress of grievances, or such a change of its institutions as might place them in harmony with its advance in civilization without having all the horrors of the French revolution called up by its rulers to frighten it into contentment. The ruin of church and state—the desolation of the country the massacre of its inhabitants, and a final submission to a military despot, are represented as the necessary consequences of any popular attempt to acquire freedom. The diffusion of vice and misery created by governments which foster ignorance is no longer remembered; the sufferings of thousands whose very sighs are suppressed by legitimate monarchs, are disbelieved; and the bloody proscriptions of tyrants, the very recording of which is prevented by despotism, are forgotten; or if perchance any of them should have escaped from oblivion, they are recalled with the most forgiving charity as the crimes of accident. But if any factious maniacs, in the mistaken pursuit of liberty, commit an atrocity, it is invested with every gratuitous horror the imagination can invent, and emblazoned to the world as the necessary consequence of the spirit of liberty; as if in fact this spirit were any more responsible for the crimes committed in its name, then water is for the convulsions it brings on in the hydrophobia.

The characters of men are determined by education, and although they may best discover themselves in the sudden knowledge of a prosperous accident, they can never be imagined w be created by it. In the like manner, the character of a nation is formed by time and circumstances; so that if on a sudden emancipation it should become intoxicated, and fall into a delirium, and commit many follies in mistaking the abuse of its faculties for the use of them, it is not emancipation but restriction that produces this evil. Hence the criminal violence of a suddenly liberated people is generally in proportion to the excess of the oppression under which they have lived. Nature, for erample, had done every thing to render France presperous and happy, but absurd institutions had contraried her intentions, and destroyed the excellence of her gifts: so that to no nation mais par envie d'attaquer que le peuple se souleve mais par impatience de souffrir." When they broke their chains, therefore, they wantoned in excess of folly. The rebellion in England was less bloody than the revolution in France, principally because the government that brought it on had been less arbitrary. Under its more benign influence, a sense of justice had grown up among the people-the nobility, instead of being a class separate and distinct from the nation, had been blended with it through the younger branches of their families, and the reformation had infused into the public mind something of the spirit of teleration, along with a zeal for religion.

The men who brought about the *Revolution* in England were the children of the *Rebellion*; they had imbibed many of its best principles; had had their minds trained up to a rational sense of justice; and hence the change of government they effected, caused the effusion of no blood at all. It was about the time of the Rebellion, too, that the English peopled their provinces in America. The colonists consequently carried over with them the seeds of liberty, which they scattered on a fresh soil, where they sprouted luxuriantly, and came to maturity in the following century. Accordingly when the oppressions of the mother country called forth the spirit of liberty in America, it achieved the independence of our country, not only without massacre but without the shedding of a drop of blood on the scaffold. The case of the unfortunate Major André does not contradict this asserion; for as a spy he fell a victim to the laws of war among civilized pations, and not the arbitrary decrees of a revolutionary tribunal.

The people of Holland, and the present inhabitants of South America, lived under the rigorous yoke of the Spaniards, and their struggles for freedom have been sanguinary in the extreme. The immolation of twenty thousand victims did not glut the vengeance of Philip II.; and as to the massacres in South America, let us draw a veil over them, lest they should unjustly injure a cause in the success of which every friend of humanity must rejoice. In France, before the revolution, the poor were oppressed, miserable, and ignorant. If then, they drew some of their principles of action from what Mr. Burke calls the alembic of hell, is their wickedness to be ascribed to the inspirations of liberty, or to those of despotism? When and where did men educated under a free government ever level all the distinctions between vice and virtue? When and where did they immolate such minds as those of Lavoirsier and Malesherbes, and such sainted spirits as these of madame Roland and Marie Antoinette, on the same scaffold with such drinkers of blood as Thinville and Carrier and Robespierre? Until these atrocities shall have been emulated by freemen, let us have done with the profanation of attributing them to the spirit of liberty.

When the States General took the resolution of forming themselves into a National Assembly, and when their determination was hailed with acclamations of applause by all France, there were three courses of policy only left to the option of Louis XVI-He might have embraced the spirited resolution of subduing his

people, and rivetting the chains of despetism on them by the army, the noblesse, and the clergy; or he might have adopted the more prudent course of throwing himself into the stream of public opinion, which was then swelling every day from the thaw of free principles, and have attempted to guide and regulate its current, so as to have prevented the dangers of a torrent or s cataract;---or he might have resolved to decide on nothing; to stand an idle spectator, suspended between prejudice and duty, and thus to dream away in indecision those hours which were big with momentous events. The first must have ended in his ruin, the second might have preserved him his crown, and the third which suited best the amiable hesitation and diffidence of his character, was seemingly perhaps the least hazardous, yet actually the most fatal. Mr. Neckar perceived the dangers of the conjuncture in which the king was placed, and urged him to be prompt and vigorous in his measures. He advised him to excite the gratitude of all honest men, by the voluntary surrender of useless prerogatives, and prevent the violent dissentions which must arise in settling the forms of a constitution in an assembly composed of twelve hundred legislators, of opposite interests and resentfully jealous of each other, by adopting without delay for France, the British constitution of government. Madame de Stael states that the differences between the three estates, might have been reconciled by the plan of their voting in one body on questions of taxation, and in two on other questions; yet it is difficult to imagine this, since the same power was virtually possessed by the commons, who were not obliged to assent to any regulations but their own on that subject. The adoption of the charter which her father prepared, might have produced that effect, and the king himself was becoming aware of its necessity, when unluckily the cabal of courtiers that hung around the palace, drew him off from Versailles to Marly, and by speaking disdainfully of the prerogatives of the British monarch, induced him to change his resolution. The rejection of this scheme paralized all Neckar's plans for maintaining the king's popularitylaid the foundation of the entire alienation of the public confidence and esteem,--and drove even the advocates of rational reform, into the adoption of the most wild and chimerical-projects. The last opportunity of compromise was then lost, and from that

day, the national assembly may be said to have laid close siege to the crown. The mode of defence too adopted by the king and court was presumptuous in the extreme. Forgetting the inventions of modern science, they took up their position behind the ramparts of antiquity, and resolved to defend the most contemptible outworks of their ancestors to the last, nor ever to yield up the most useless bastion or counterscarp until their enemies had demolished it.

When a mere rumor of Mr. Necker's resignation was perceived to have excited vehement displeasure in the nation, the ultra royalist cabal resolved on keeping him in office until their stratagem was ripe for execution. They therefore advised the king to feign an entire acquiescence in his views, at the very time they were discussing the propriety of lodging him in the Bastile. Private orders were next given to the German troops to advance towards Paris; whilst a conspiracy was forming to collect the members of the assembly, least favorable to innovation, at Compiegne; to hurry them into compliance with such loans or taxes as the necessities of the government required, and then dissolve them for ever. Could any, but men in whom the rage of anger had smothered the perceptions of reason, have embraced a scheme of Machiavelian policy like this? Gould any who retained common sense have failed to see that in the state in which France then was, it was as impotent an attempt as that in ancient times, of elimbing up to heaven by the aid of the tower which presumptuous folly piled on the plains of shinar?

The king was too weak to escape becoming the bubble of these simpletons, and too good to expose his minister to their vengeance. He therefore, when the arrangements were finished, issued an order to Mr. Neckan in the middle of the night, to quit France instantaneously and in a clandestine manner. This minister, who had much of the beautiful part of French chivalry in his character, obeyed the royal order so promptly as to leave his own family ignorant of his exile, and to give no occasion to the dragoous who pursued him to exercise their commission of arrest. No sooner was it known, on the thirteenth of July at Versailles, that he was dismissed, than Mounier moved to supplicate the king to recal him, and was supported in doing so by the virtuous Lalli Tollendalh, who exerted on that occasion, all the sweetness

and persuasiveness of his eloquence. He contrasted the gloomy situation of France in the preceding summer, before the recal of Mr. Neckar, with her comparative prosperity afterwards. At that time, said he, the laws were without ministers, and twenty. five millions of people without judges; the treasury was empty and without credit; the people had no hope but in the States General, and no confidence in the ministers who promised to assemble it; and in addition to all these political evils, nature had, in her wrath, added the desolation of the country and the prospect of famine. But the cry of truth reached the king, and he recalled Mr Neckar from exile. In a moment justice resumed her sceptre; public credit re-appeared, and the treasury was replenished; the prisons were opened and returned their victims to society; the two worlds were put in contribution to prevent famine, and the revolts in the provinces appeared. Yet this man, who not a year before sacrificed himself to the kingdom, was now driven like a malefactor from it.

Immediately after this, occurred that feast of the Guards which produced the most impetuous flash of eloquence that ever burst from the lips of Mirabeau. The thunder of his voice on this occasion shook the monarchy of France to the very point of dissolution; and if those who governed it had not suffered their wills to lord it over their reason, they might have seen in that speech the hand writing inscribing their destiny on the wall. Its audacity alone, was a convincing evidence that royalty no longer inspired fear or veneration in France; and the applause it excited, might have shown the Court the folly of attempting to contrary the temper which then prevailed in the nation.

No sooner was the exile of Neckar known in Paris, than the whole city rose in insurrection—the theatness were closed as an act of public mourning, and a hundred thousand men set deliberately to work to demolish the Bastile; nor did they desist from their labour, until not one stone was left standing on another.— The same spirit flew over the nation, and so fast too, that it is asserted by historians, that in less than a fortnight two millions of men were up in arms against the cabal at Versailles, who stood petrified with astonishment and grief. The king now repented of his folly in parting with the only pilot who might have conducted the ship of state into smooth water. The troops were ordered immediately to retire, and couriers were dispatched in pursuit of Neckar, to solicit him to return. This minister had made his escape to the nearest frontier of France, that of Belgium, and was pursuing the route to Switzerland by the Rhine, when he was overtaken by the king's messengers. He obeyed the summons. But he who had gone out of France leaving nothing but grief and consternation behind him, now returned into it, not with the delivering strength of Camillus, but, as Mr. Burke expresses it, to seat himself, "like Marius, on ruins."

The political irritation of the French nation was very high, even before the court, by the bahishment of Mr. Necker, threw a challenge into its face. The opening of the states general had excited a great effervescence in the public mind, and nothing had been yet done to soften and subdue it. Delays in verifying the election of the members, and debates on the organization of the assembly, had exposed the nakedness of the government, and sharpened the jealousy with which each party watched the other. The Commons had met with the conviction,* that there were so many difficulties to be overcome, and sacrifices to be made; so many prejudices to vanquish and old habits to root out; and so many powers to destroy and to create, that there would be we chance of the establishment of a free form of government, unless the assembly should be organized into one chamber.

As France laboured under the oppression of the higher orders, they excited the fears of all, and none apprehended danger from the triumph of the Tiers Etat. Hence, many members of the noblesse and clergy concurred with the Commons, in the belief that an union into one body was necessary until the constitution should be formed. They were aware that a single assembly was peculiarly liable to be led astray by the insinuations of intrigue, or the gusts of passion, but deemed this danger the lesser evil in the exigency in which they were placed. They were aware, that no constitution of government is good, in which it is in the power of one branch to ruin another; and that in a monarchy, the cement of a nobility is necessary, according to Montesquieu's maxim, "point de monarque, point de noblesse; point de noblesse point de monarque; mais on a un despote;" yet as all the concessions were to be made by the upper classes, it was deemed

* See the speeches of Lalli Tellendsih, and the Count D'Entraigues.

uccessary to strip them first, and make them independent afterwards.

The discussions of the assembly drew the attention of all the French to politics. The study of their past history mortified their pride; the freedom of the British constitution excited their jealousy; and the want of a national theatre for the display of the national talent, roused all their vanity and ambition. They were then as brave in the field as the absence of all sense of danger could make them; as full of contempt for the royal authority as the sudden discovery of its impotence could inspire; and as resentful against the privileged classes as a long period of unhappy submission could render them. To provoke a great nation in such a mood might have been folly at any time; but, for the king to determine on mounting the high horse of Louis XIV. at the time he did, was little short of madness. The age was gone by in which the nation might have been pleased to arch its neck in "proud submission, or to curvet in graceful obedience to the check of the royal rein. It had now acquired a mettle, which, under the touch of the whip and spur, would be certain to bring down the giddy rider to the ground with all his weight of gothic armour around him.

There is nothing more unjust than the practice which generally prevails, of condemning all the public assemblies of France with indiscriminate severity. Before we consider the conduct therefore of the Legislative Assembly and of the Convention, let us review the acts of the National, or as it is more generally called, Constituent Assembly. It proclaimed universal toleration in matters of religion, and thus made virtue the test of piety, and took away from hypocrisy the mask of truth-it rendered monastic seclusion obligatory only on the consciences of devotees, and thus relieved many from the intolerable hardship of being imprisoned for life, in spite of repentance. It abolished Lettres de Cachet, and thus deprived the king of the power of exiling and ruining any individual; or of shutting him up for life in solitary confinement to gratify private resentment, or the persecuting caprice of any great man-it forbade the future use of torture, and thus deprived the amateurs of cruelty of all opportunity of enjoying spectacles of agony-it ordered all criminal prosecutions to be carried on in public, and thus stript prose-

cutors and false witnesses of the chance of perjuring themselves with impunity; whilst, by adopting the trial by jury, it secured to the accused, not only the probability of acquittal when innocent, but that most beautiful privilege of a British subject, the right of being presumed innocent until proved guilty. By establishing the liberty of the press, it secured to truth an ultimate triumph over error, in spite of the abuse of that privilege which followed in the first hours of its fruition. By putting down the peculiar privileges of the noblesse, and by limiting the prerogatives of the crown, it sought to preserve personal freedom. By exploding the whole system of monopoly, it revived industry, and by suppressing the motley group of provincial laws, (one of the relics of feudal barbarism) it opened the way for the establishment of a regular tariff, and a general code of laws. Bv the division and sale of the great estates of the clergy and crown it brought them into cultivation, and rescued an immense body of people from a state of idleness which perpetuated their ignorance. By arming the national guards or militia, it covered France with a shield, and by renouncing the right of conquest, it tried to take away from her neighbours all excuse for assailing her.

Such, as far as I can learn from history and tradition, were the principal acts of the Constituent Assembly; and yet evidently rational and just as they were, they excited the indignation of all the aristocrats of Europe. No innovation could be good in their eyes which did not proceed directly from the throne; and therefore they fell into the folly of condemning all those changes even fifteen years after an Empress of a people, comparatively barbarous, had abolished torture and proclaimed toleration over a dominion extending from the shores of the Baltic to the great wall of China. That the Constituent Assembly fell into some errors-that it hurried on too precipitately a change in the government-that it absurdly suffered the mob to applaud and hoot from its galleries-and that from an overweening apprehension of the tyranny from which the nation was then escaping, they omitted to take proper precautions against running into the opposite extreme, is most true. But in order to judge correctly of the conduct of that assembly, it is necessary to transport one's mind back to the time when it acted; to remember the grievances

it had to redress, and to reflect how natural it was for a people who had been oppressed for fourteen centuries, to endeavour, not only to secure the game whilst they had the lead in their own hands, but to be over-jealous, after they had won it, of the power which circumstances made it prudent to leave to the crown and nobility.

Although the French were neither sufficiently enlightened, nor sufficiently virtuous, at the era of the revolution, to live under a pure republic; they had many men of great virtue and ability among them, who, if their plans had not been thwarted at first by the aristocrats, and blasted afterwards by the jacobins, might have succeeded in establishing a just and liberal form of government.-These were aware of the advantage of gliding instead of plunging a nation into liberty; and would have therefore selected for their country a sort of monarchical republic, in which, although the crown would have been hereditary, the minister would have been the real king, and possessed of sufficient power to control the licentiousness of a newly emancipated people. But unhappily the extreme inequality of rank and fortune had divided the population of France into two species, the lords of voluptuousness and the slaves of penury. From this division, flowed that stream of prejudice which drowned the generous efforts of the wise and the brave in favor of their country, and which finally overflowed for a time, her reason, her virtue, and her happiness. In vain did Neckar, and Mounier, and La Fayette, and a band of virtuous patriots exert themselves to bring about a cordial reconciliation between the king and the nation. The ultra royalists opposed, with irreconcilable activity, every scheme that promised to be salutary or lasting, and thus created the counterbalancing faction of the jacobins, who openly declared that no reliance could be placed on the promises of the king, and that there was no safety for the nation but in the demolition of every pre-existing institution. Thus, on the one hand, despotism sat brooding over France like Milton's form of sin, fair and beautiful above, but foul and grovelling in her other half, whilst ever and anon around her howled hideously the curs of aristocracy. On the other hand rose the less distinguishable but more ghastly substance of jacobinism, which like the other shape of death, stood "black as night, fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell, and shook

a dreadful dart." It was in vain that words of reconciliation and peace proceeded from the throne; it was in vain that the accents of liberty and justice fell from the party of the righteousthey were all drowned by the hideous peal yelled out by those gigantic monsters.

When the plan of a constitution came to be discussed, those discordant circumstances destroyed that pleasing harmony of opinion which had prevailed in the majority of the assembly in the beginning, and split it into three turbulent parties, which, as Æschylus said of the Gorgons, had but one eye between The moderate, or liberal party only made use of this. them. and notwithstanding some slight diversities of opinion which existed in it, as to the extent to which reform should be carried, all concurred in desiring the regeneration of the state. The more cautious members of this party wished a simple reform of the abuses of the existing government, and thought that if the ravages of time and the encroachments of private interest on the public good were repaired, and some ameliorations made in its form, it might still answer very well the purposes of France, and the genius of her people. The more sanguine members, however, opposed this patching up of the uncouth edifice of antiquity, and fancied they might demolish it at pleasure, and then build upon its foundations, and out of its materials, a new structure infinitely better adapted to the necessities of the nation. The fearless presumption of inexperience, and the very natural apprehension of the resilient propensities of the court to arbitrariness, caused this section of the liberal party to predominate. It would have been most easy, indeed, to have compromised these differences of opinion to the advantage of the nation, if the high court party had been willing to consent to a rational reform; for as the National Assembly would have been then enabled to cut off the higher branches of prerogative and privilege with as much facility as Tarquin struck off the heads of the tallest poppies in his garden, they might, whilst unexasperated by opposition, have been willing to let the remainder take root and flourish. But unluckily for the aristocrats themselves, and what was still more important, for the cause of liberty likewise, they refused to shelter themselves under a constitution like that of England, and voted against it with a spirit of irreconcilable hatred; or according to Madame de Stael, "from the detestable calculation" of securing a return to despotism, by excess of evil. But let their motive have been what it may, they acted with unexampled folly; and by the rancour of their opposition, produced as much ruin as malevolence could have wished. By exasperating their opponents they drove them to fall off from their allegiance to reason, and finally to embrace a scheme of government, which, however beautiful in theory, was wild, visionary and absurd when applied to a people so ignorant of the duties of freemen as the French then were. It was thus that the chance of establishing a fair constitution in France was first defeated by the fatuity of the orders, and afterwards lost by the delirium of the jacobins. In fact the old regime had nursed up so many prejudices in France, that the substitution of an equitable system of government for the existing one was impossible; for virtue, talent, and the right understanding of liberty, were incapable of wrestling against the spirit of faction which those prejudices had engendered, and which as the Abbé Sieyes expressed it "now resolved to be free without knowing how to be just." How many wees might have been spared in this country-and how many sorrows to mankind, if those factions had been then sensible enough to bridle their passions. "Mais helas! le genie de la France precipitoit la marche de l'esprit public." In the intoxication of vanity, the French imagined themselves the wisest of nations. No one stopped to reflect, that the faculties of the human mind are so limited by nature, that they cannot grow and expand themselves without cultivation, nor acquire much knowledge without experience. The government had taken as little care of the political education of the people as the clergy had of their religious instruction, so that they were pretty well void of respect for any law, human or divine. Those who doubt this fact, may examine for information, the savage equality which the French called liberty in the first years of the revolution, and the notions which the peasants in the neighbourhood of the metropolis entertained of a Creator, when, after the Convention acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, they inscribed over their deore, "Vive le bon Dieu."

The great body of the French nation had no other idea of government at that time, than as an engine of oppression. When invited, therefore, to break their chains, they listened with most pleasure to those who ranted most violently about liberty, or who flattered them with the most outrageous promises. In the beginning they might have been satisfied with little, if it had been freely given to them; but when they discovered that they had broken out of prison by the strength of their own hands, and were become lawgivers, they embraced anarchy to murder des-They did not want a republic because they did not poti**sm**. know what it was all they wanted, was to domineer in their turn, and they did so most violently. How different was the conduct of the Americans when they rose to assert their liber-As they had been educated in a healthful respect for lawties? ful government, and a detestation of usurped authority alone, they comprehended what they asked for. Accordingly, when they perceived the measure of encroachment to be filling up for them, they rose in revolution, not to put down all government, but to limit its powers and define their boundaries. In France. the people never interfered directly in public affairs, until the government was dissolved; nor did they exercise any coer. cion over the new authorities, until the country was thrown into confusion by the rejection of the only form of government then suited to the circumstances of France. Three months were suffered to pass away, after the Bastile was taken and the powers of government suspended, without the adeption of any plan of policy to allay the distractions of the public mind; or to serve as a centre towards which the national enthusiasm might gravitate. Visionary schemes and empirical conceits-presumptuous assertions and ridiculous witticisms, were incessantly let losse to whip up the mob into commotion, and by the end of those three months all the heads of that Hydra that slept in Paris were awakened. Accordingly, in the month of October, 1789, it drew itself off from Paris to Versailles, for the purpose, as it enpressed, "d'entourer Monsieur Louis Bourbon de bons patriets," and there, like the serpent of Laocoon, it entwined itself around the king and the National. Assembly, nor ever released them from the folds of its fraternal hug, until every symptom of life was extinguished.

One might imagine, that after the court had been thus dragged to Paris, the aristocrats would have seen the weakness of their cause, and have been reconciled to the loss of their privileges and the establishment of a limited monarchy. If they were too much puffed up with vain-glorious ambition to discover the expediency of this step themselves, they might have found an useful lesson on the subject in their favourite Machiavel—if not in their text book, his Prince, at least in a better part of his works ,his Commentary on Livy. Among other things they might have there learned how absurdly those who prefer establishing a despotism before a republic or limited monarchy, throw away renown, honour, security, and peace of mind, for infamy, shame, vituperation, danger, and inquietude. "Ne si auvegono per questo partito quanta fama, quanta gloria, quanto honore, sicurta, quiete, con satisfatione d'animo et fuggono, et in quanta infamia, vituperio, biasimo, pericolo et inquietudine incorrono."

The aristocrats and the jacobins who occupied the extreme right and the extreme left of the Assembly, were a majority of the Chamber; and although they bitterly detested each other, they often concurred and voted together from the impulses of revenge on the one part, and the calculations of malice on the other. The rash conduct of these factions paralyzed the government, so that it fell defenceless into the arms of the populace, and had no alternative left but to fall backwards into tyranny, or plunge forward into anarchy. This happened at a time, too, when every fresh evidence of the impotence of the fallen government rendered the rising throughout the kingdom more general and more terrific. There are no people, I believe, more amiable and forgiving than the French-certainly none who are more easily ruled, if their governors catch the drift of their vanity; but it must be admitted, at the same time, that they are endowed with a mercurial vivacity of temper, which is peculiarly apt to transport them beyond the bounds of moderation. They had suffered too much to revolt with temperance, and their conduct in the first hours of their triumph proved the truth of the maxim, that "la violence de la revolte est toujours en proportion de l'injustice de l'esclavage."

LETTER VIII.

Paris, Feb. 25th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

٠

When the executive branch of the government in France was broken down and the legislative had fallen into the hands of the Parisian mob, there remained but few hopes for the liberties of the country. The characteristic feature of all classes in this metropolis is an omnivorous passion for novelty; and when the Constituent Assembly had done so much as in reason and sound judgment it ought to have done, it was still obliged to go on to gratify this guilty appetite for change. The hall of a deliberative Senate was converted into the arena of a polemic ampitheatre, whose boxes were filled with a furious and ferocious rabble, that adjudged the prize of popularity, not to the eloquent and the just, not to the virtuous and the wise, but to the unprincipled and the turbulent, who flattered their vanity by gaudy eulogiums, or who justified their wickedness by preposterous epigrams. As yet, however, the party of the jacobins was but a feeble minority, and although it was augmented by all, whom the love of applause could estrange from duty, or the fear of popular resentment bias from principle, it could never have usurped the government of this great nation, if the privileged orders would have joined the friends of rational liberty, or have ceased to inflame and agitate the public by attacks against the new order of But although the judgment of the higher orders was as things usual on political subjects in the rear of common sense, they had sagacity enough to know that the quarry was sometimes lost by over-running. They therefore calculated, that by hurrying on . the torrent of revolution with unprincipled velocity, they might create an eddy in the stream, and that by embracing that opportune moment to bring in foreign troops, they might produce a

counter current, and thus recover every thing which had been swept away.

Their attachment to the privileges they had inherited was extremely natural, but their perseverance in applauding the old regime, which, in their minds, time had rendered venerable and submission sacred, was as absurd as it was impolitic. For, unquestionably, this pretended constitution of France, during thirteen or fourteen centaries, is the merest chimera that ever amused the imagination of a political sophist. A royal authority always existed, it is true, but in a state of perpetual vacillation between the submission to law and the indulgence of caprice. To say that in the earlier ages of her history, under the Merovingian and Carlovingian Princes, the government was a representative and limited monarchy, and that despotic power was gradually usurped by the houses of Valois and Bourbon, is not enough, although this fact alone might sanction the beautiful observation of Madame de Stael, that it is liberty which is ancient, and despotism that is modern in France. In fact, the government of this country was perpetually varied by the personal character of its monarchs, scarcely any one of whom ever reigned after the fashion of his predecessor, so that a multitude of constitutions, more or less rude, absurd, and infamous, have. at different periods, fallen to its lot.* Even in the year of 1788, the laws all over France were presented on the point of the bayenet, and the carriers charged with the publication of a royal order, were sometimes in danger of their lives.

I fear, however, I shall provoke your patience by a too frequent recurrence to the abuses of the old regime; but there is no other mode of effectually vindicating the spirit of liberty against the foul aspersions which have been cast on it, but by ferreting out the causes of the revolutionary crimes, and exhibiting them to view. My object is to hold up to you a faithful picture of the political disorders of the time; of the chaos of royal, feudal, clerical and judicial usurpations, and to ask, whether, if you were to transport yourself back to the year '89, and forget the events which have warped your judgment, you would not think the Constituent Assembly had strong reason to throw this crude

* See Les Constitutions des tous les peuples par le Comte Lanjuinais.

mass of ore into the crucible of revolution, and melt it down to its proper standard. If the feudalists and jacobins threw dross into the political mint, and debased the pure metal by a vile alloy, it is certainly unjust to attribute its worthlessness to the friends of rational reform. That some of the later acts of that assembly were rash and impolitic, I do not pretend to deny, but no man, I think, can look dispassionately into these very acts without seeing that it was dragged into them by a chain of invincible circumstances, every link of which had been forged in the furnace of despotism. Believe me, my dear sir, the belief that the government of France was broken down by the spirit of liberty, and that the assemblies which accomplished its ruin, were composed of republicans, is the falsest vision that was ever conjured up in the brain of distempered and designing politicians to impose on the credulity of mankind. The nation was tired of oppression, and was resolved to get rid of it. Take the leaders of each party that raised the cry of discontent; examine them in detail, and show me the republicans among them. One half of the Constituent Assembly consisted of nobles and priests, who were essentially anti-republican from interest and habit, and but a fraction of whom was disposed to limit as all the prerogatives of the crown. The representatives of the Tiers Etat were unanimous in favour of reformation; but divided in opinion as to the extent to which it should be carried. The larger party of them marched under the banner of Mirabeau, who was, we know, neither a republican in practice nor in theory; who, in spite of the intemperance into which his abhorrence of tyranny and his projects of ambition led him, was a resolute admirer of dignity in the crown, and whose eloquence would have been exerted if he had lived beyond the month of April, '91, in defending it. The more moderate reformers, the friends of Mr. Neckar; the Mouniers, the Maluets, the Lanjuinais, the Lally Tollendals, &c. were the admirers of the British constitution, and the advocates of its adoption in France. The remainder of the Assembly consisted of a small corps of jacobins, who detested republicanism as sincerely as they did royalty; who voted on all occasions from the calculations of self-interest; who were, what St. John called the Pharisees, a generation of vipers, and whose tongues, if they had not been envenomed by the rancorous hos-

ĉ

tility of the Oligarchists, would never have grown into sufficient strength to pierce and empoison the heart of the nation. Before the Constituent Assembly reached the day fixed for its dissolution, the 30th of Sept, 1791, it was sufficiently evident, that the inhabitants of France neither approved the malignant projects of the jacobins, nor the revengeful schemes of the feudalists: and therefore these two factions united to render the members of the present assembly ineligible to the next, and speciously covered under the veil of disinterestedness their malicious hypocrisy. I do not know whether there was most of insanity or wickedness in this resolution. To expel any set of men from the legislature of any country, for no other reason but their experience in that department, would be unjust; but for a country like this, in which the science of legislation was so new, that twelve hundred citizens only had devoted any time to the study and practice of the art of government, to exclude those very men, and those only, from her councils, was the height of political folly. It was to declare experience and knowledge detrimental in judging of the aptitude of a nation to a new system of laws-it was to proclaim the exercise of legislation the easiest of all trades; and this is what I believe no man, in his right senses, could have done, unless blinded by the falsest enthusiasm, or astuated by the craftiest revenge.

When the Legislative Assembly met, it turned out therefore exactly as might have been expected. Being composed of men perfectly raw and undisciplined in the tactics of government, it was animated by an ambition to rival its predecessor in the rashness of its innovations, and the splendour of its achievements. Hence, as there remained no more aged and cankered branches to be cut off from the tree of state, the resolution was taken of laving the axe into the very root of it; not for the purpose of nourishing its good parts, of causing the blossoms of republicanism to shoot forth and to bear their clusters, but from that selfish improvidence which makes the Indian fell the tree to gather the fruit. Thus this Assembly rained every thing; so that, when the Convention assembled two years afterwards, it found the work of demolition so nearly completed, that it gathered up the fruit into its own hands, and found it to be like the apple of Sodom, fair and beautiful without, but rottenness and bitterness at the core. You may take these three anest-

blies in succession, and analyze the principles of all the majorities that ruled them, and I defy you to show that any one of them was composed of real republicana. That a small corps of republicans existed, is most true: the noble and eloquent Vergniauds, and Condorcets, and Guadets, with the small minority of the Gironde, were men of that description. But the Jacobins broke in among them, like the fiery serpents among the people of Israel. It was in xain that the eagle was held up, as Mosea held up his serpent of brass, to save the people that looked on it;----the hissing monsters hood-winked the symbol of liberty with the bonnet rouge, (the badge of the freedman.) and hence "much of the people died." These Jacobins pretended, it is true, to put on for a moment the livery of republicanism, and they wore the mask as long as it suited their purposes, for although they loved despotism truly, they loved it best in their own persons. When therefore, under the Convention, the committee of public safety grasped all power into its own hards, all those who had virtue enough to possess sentiments really republican, were outlawed with a wilder ferocity than the proudest aristocrats. In the reign of terror which followed, many of the latter moved unburt through the dance of death, but scarcely any one of the former escaped the carnage.

But as we shall hereafter have cause to observe the consistent hostility of the Jacobins to every scheme of good government, ever proposed in France, let us now return from this digression to the causes which raised the hurricane so high as to blow down the whole structure of society in this kingdom. The equivocal conduct of the court, by creating a general distrust of its sincerity, was one of the most powerful of these. The king and his counsellors seem to have never reflected on the truth of a remark of a high prerogative writer, in his book on Casuistry, that "the people are all kings when they choose;"* nor do they appear to have remembered that there is nothing so fatal to an impotent government as a suspicion of its hypocritical acquiescence in what it has not the power to reject. Confidence is like a bird in the hand, for if you once let it go, you can seldom catch it again. Now, from the moment that the Emigres united themselves with the armies of Austria and Prus-

* Jer. Taylor.

sia, (July, 1792,) and in the name, and by the authority of the king,* were seen on the plains of Champagne in full march to overset the new constitution, the public mind became so alarmed that all belief of the possibility of maintaining, under Louis XVI. both internal liberty, and national independence, was lost. Nor can it be denied, that the circumstances of the times were strong enough to justify this fatal suspicion, and to suggest even the unavailing absurdity of holding the royal family as hostages for the good behaviour of the allies. But if, when the French abolished monarchy, (Sept. 1792,) they had been either wise, or fit for liberty, they would have disburthened themselves of the royal family by their immediate exile, since their confinement in France could only serve to fire the torch of discord at home. and to throw a false light on the sinister designs of their own enemies abroad. The arrest of the king at Varennes, in his flight out of France, (June, 1791,) was for this reason a public calamity, and led afterwards to the effusion of much of the best blood in the kingdom. Among those who subsequently voted for his detention and imprisonment, many were actuated by a belief of its expediency; some by the love of popularity; and a few by motives of malignity. Unhappily for the French, they had been so long accustomed to regard royalty with dread, that they could not be brought to believe it, in any instance, a mere phantom of terror; nor be convinced that a clandestine union of the court with the foreign enemies of France, would, so far from , increasing its strength, act like the perfidy of Delilah, and shear off the locks of its power.

The evident fondness, too, with which the king leaned on the side of the nobles in preference to that of the people, exasperated the jealousy of the latter, and abated the ardour of their loyalty; for the hatred of the French was much stronger against aristocracy than royalty. This passion was vehement from the beginning, and yet grew stronger as the revolution advanced.— The first, or Constituent Assembly, was split into three factions, the aristocrats, the constitutionalists, and the mountain or jacobins; but the second, or Legislative Assembly, was divided into constitutionalists, republicans, and jacobins—and the Convention consisted only of a few republicans, called Girondists, and

* See Letters and Memoirs of his Minister, Bertrand de Moleville.

the Jacobins. Yet, notwithstanding the factious divisions of the two former, the three first years of the revolution were tolerably promising. If the rage of demolition had then given way to the taste for reconstruction; if the French had then been content with casting off "the old and wrinkled skin of corruption," instead of getting "drunk with blood to vomit crime," would not all the world have now hailed their revolution as the most prosperous accident that ever turned up in the long course of ages to promote the happiness of mankind? Would not those assemblies, for the energy with which they braved every peril, be now universally applauded, instead of being exposed to the contumelious snarlings of those who love to libel liberty? But these political Incurables will never admit that the revolution found the French corrupted to its hand, and therefore it may not be amiss to recall a few historical recollections, which may throw a little light on the subject.

Marmontel relates, in his memoirs, that Chamfort observed to • him, in 1789, "that the love of money and the wish of pillage, were all powerful among the people; that the experiment had been tried in the faubourg St. Antoine, and that it had cost the Duke of Orleans a mere trifle to induce the Canaille to pull down the manufactory of Reviellon, at the time he was supporting one hundred of their families." It was, I think, Mirabeau who observed about the same time, that "with one thousand louis d'ors he could raise an insurrection; that the mass of the nation was a flock too much stinted to think of any thing but grazing, and quite ready to follow any dogs or shepherds that might come among them." In addition to these theoretical sugrestions, there are a few facts on record. I would ask whether the tearing to pieces of the first victims of popular fury, in the Palais Royal, in '89;---whether the conflagrations at that time in the provinces; the burning of old men in Normandy; the dissection of Barras, &c. in Languedock, can be attributed by even the craziest apostles of despotism to republicanism? No! the spirit of liberty did never yet so harden the hearts of men. as to make humanity be looked on as weakness, and a ferocious intolerance pass for patriotism. Among a free people, such crimes as those I have alluded to, would inspire universal horror.

The living under a free government inspires sentiments of meral dignity into the mass of the nation; whilst it raises up principles of justice in their minds, and teaches them to respect the laws, from which they derive protection; but arbitrary government, on the contrary inculcates a respect for power above right, and gives the subject no other idea of government, than of a machine of force, for the purpose, not of protecting, but of ruling mankind. Was it the nation educated under the commonwealth, and enslaved by Clesar and Augustus, or was it the race which grew up under the wing of their tyranny, that rendered Rome the opprobrium of nations? Was it not, as was said by Milton, only after intellectual servitude, had prepared the way for political, and after Rome had been some time enchained and debased by despotism, that she fell under the dominion of a set of odious monsters and grew rich in depravity? If the explosion of the revolution discovered a hidden rottenness in a part of the French nation, that rottenness was produced by the deleterious shade of arbitrary power alone. A short enjoyment of the sunshine of liberty would have healed the canker, and preserved the timbers of the state from decay. But the idea of liberty in France was clouded. The nation was so accustomed to absolute power, that it had no conception of a government without it, and therefore when they took away despotic power from the king, they gave it to the mob, and called that, liberty. They acted like the fool, who because his hands were frozen, thrust them into the fire to be thawed, and they paid dearly enough for their folly.

The crimes of the French revolution grew out of the excitement produced in corrupt minds, by foreign war and domestic treason. If the privileged orders, instead of abscanding into foreign countries, to rouse their hostility against France, had generously consented, even as late as '91 to the sacrifices, without which a free government could not be established in this country, a tolerably well balanced constitution might then have been formed, and the nation saved from the tyranny of the Jacobins. It is a great mistake to suppose that the vision of republicanism ever really enchanted this people; they wanted to get rid of what they had, and to do so, they flew to what "they knew not of." Even the men who in the close of '92 abolished monarchy, were yet a while convinced that the nation was not fit for a republic, and felt that the spirit of a constitution ought to be infused into a people, before its laws could be expected to correct and restrain them. A harlequin or merry Andrew cannot put on with becoming decency, the habiliments of a gentleman, and the law which commanded such a one to assume the airs of good breeding, must become the mere dead letter of decorum.

It is only after the passions of men are violently excited that they can believe a political metamorphosis more easy and natural than a personal one, or such as are amusingly feigned by the peets nor can they otherwise imagine the countenance of freedom which is assumed by the freedman of yesterday, any thing more than the mash of liberty, put on to conceal his natural expression of servility. Although the revolutions of nations afford us many examples of the re-establishment of freedom, by a people who had lost it, but who retained its spirit, together with the memory of the blessings it bestowed on their ancestors, yet they do not perhaps afford a single instance of a people that have suddenly suc- . ceeded in establishing a free government after living for ages under a despotism. Every great political change, in order to be good and lasting, should be gradual, for nothing but time and education can lift up the apprehensions of a whole nation to a just understanding of free goverment. Abrupt alterations may be embraced with ardour by the public imagination, but can never find the national character prepared to receive them; and no government can be harmonious in action, unless its principles be in unison with those of the people it is intended to protect. Hence whenever the government, for which a nation rises in rebellion, is so discordant with its character as to cause the dressing of scaffolds and the shedding of human blood, its adoption seldom or never turns out to any immediate good. In Rome the tyranny of the Tarquins led to liberty, not after their execution, but after their simple expulsion. The conspiracy against that of Cæsar on the contrary, began in blood and ended in despotism. In Switzerland the companions of Tell took an oath to be just towards their enemies; and when they resolved to drive their myrmidon oppressors out of their country, they resolved to do it if possible, without hurting a hair of their heads; and we all know of the prosperity and happiness of that country after the change. The Dutch when they rose, did not demand the blood of Philip to

avenge their wrongs; but such was their spirit, that although he was extremely powerful, and waged with great wrath an iniquitous war against them, he was never able to break down the spirit of resistance in Holland. The English in the rebellion changed their government, by taking off the head of their king, as well as that of his minister; they fell under the tyranny of a Protector, and their struggle for liberty ended in the restoration of absolute monarchy. They began their revolution in a spirit of wiser patriotism, and therefore instead of spilling the blood of James IL, and thus exciting a sympathy for royalty, they sent him over into France, to enjoy his principles where he had imbibed them; and after his departure established the most rational government in Europe. The Americans were roused into revolution by the claim on the part of the king and parliament of Great Britain to tax them; they never imagined that the taste of blood could be refreshing to the palates of freemen, and their struggle for indepen-- dence, ended in the establishment of a government purely republican, which has now existed near half a century, without having had occasion to erect a scaffold for a traitor. How far the observation of this tranquil scene of government, in which a nation enjoys perfect freedom, without regret for the past, or inquietude for the future, may excite the rivalship of other nations and teach them moderation in pursuit of liberty, time only can determine.

The French began their revolution by opening some of the sluices of blood;---they soon became the puppets of the veriest monster that ever disgraced mankind, and plunged along with him into a sea of it:---they had no sooner reached a resting place, than they were assailed by the inclement blasts of a second Directory,-and to shelter themselves from these, they yoked their destinies to the ambition of a despet, who after bleaching the fields of Europe with their bones, and conducting them twice through the Caudine forks, left them at last at the mercy of their ancient governors. Thus was France led astray in every stage of her revolution by folly; and after racing fantastically round the circle of absurd constitutions, she is now pretty much where she was in the autumn of '89. The knowlege she has gained of the ground over which she has passed, is to be sure a great advantage; for there is reason to believe that the scorching she got in the perihelium of her revolutionary esbit from Jacobinism, and the freezing she met with in the aphelion from tyranny, will produce a wiser balancing of her centrifugal and centripetal tendencies hereafter, and give her in her future career a steadier and a juster motion.

I am inclined to believe that the execution of the royal family of France, has done more injury to the cause of republicanism, than all the other atrocities of the jacobins put together. The disproportion of their punishment to their offence, and the opportunity which it gave them of displaying their fortitude and piety to the greatest advantage, have not only obliterated the remembrance of their errours, but enlisted the sympathies of mankind, more in behalf of royalty than the recollection of all the virtues of all the monarchs that ever governed France. The respect and pity which were awakened by the spectacle of all that was illustrious in rank, and amiable in private life, in the last stage of humiliation; and the contempt and abhorrence which were excited by the brutal cruelty of their oppressors, became unjustly attached to the causes which the parties respectively represented. No argument converts so fast as the blood of martyrs; and thus the aristocrats of France, like the cavaliers in England, drew their advantage from the royal suffering.

It is not necessary to run further back into antiquity, nor to dive deeper into the obscurity of other modern revolutions, to support the position that political changes, beginning in blood, are for a time, at least, disastrous. There are living examples of the fact before our eyes. That of St. Domingo began nearly thirty years ago in crime, and has exhibited every deformity of injustice and tyranny. It is now more than ten years since South America became convulsed by a struggle for liberty-since the spirit of faction stained its infancy with blood; and yet we do not find any one of those nations settled down under the administration of a wise government. The late rising in Spain was accomplished with such imposing gravity and moderation, that it looks like the spontaneous soaring of patriotism, inspired by a noble spirit of independence. But if her late violent contest with France, which partook of the character of a civil war, did not fatigue her public with confusion, and create an abhorrence of bloodshed, the change may be too sudden to pass off without convulsions.

When a people begin a revolution by shedding blood, it is a sign they are corrupt. The extinction of a whole royal family may be an offering to vengeance, but it is no guarantee to liberty. When Caligula and Nero and the whole race of the Cæsars were dead, the Eagle of the republic still remained unplumed. The spirit of faction only loves cruelty, for that of liberty delights in mercy. Although the one is an angel, and the other a fiend, they are apt to present themselves together to a nation, and according as she embraces the one or the other for her tutalary genius, is she prosperous or miserable. The spirit of liberty sets herself about to charm and to inspire-but that of faction attempts to drive and to bully-the former is gentle and firm, but the latter is turbulent and trumpet-mouthed; and as the voice of a stentor pleases best a depraved understanding, less accustomed to consult its reason than its passions, the latter is apt to be preferred by a newly emancipated people. I do not believe there is a wiser or a truer observation in all Machiavel's writings, than that in which he speaks of the incapacity of such a people to distinguish the measures which assail, from those which defend its liberties. Such a people, says he, are like a wild beast trained up in confinement, and whose natural ferocity has been tamed by imprisonment. When by chance such a beast has got loose into the fields he is incapable of procuring himself nourishment, or of finding a den to shelter himself; and thus becomes a prey to the first hands that cunningly seek to put irons on him. Such was the case exactly with the French. When they had broken loose and torn their monarchy nearly down, neither a Dion, nor a Timoleon, nor a Marcus Aurelius, could have satisfied them as a king, nor have held the balance of justice in equilibrium. And afterwards, when they had trampled down the last vestige of royal prerogative and aristocratic privilege, neither the virtues of an Epaminondas, nor a Tully, nor a Washington, could have been strong enough to shut them out from the temple of discord. In fact, men accustomed to submission grow indocile and insolent in prosperity, like the lacquey who having drawn a prize in a lottery, slapped the face of the first gentleman he met. The tree of liberty, said Barrere, " can never flourish, till it is watered by the blood of a king."

Nothing is so difficult as to turn a people inneed to certain habits, out of their old way of acting and thinking. The inhabitants of Rome still carry their children, when in danger from sickness, to the chapel, which stands on the spot where they fancy Romulus and Remus to have been exposed and saved; the Greeks are still said to have the Pyrrhic dance; and I remember, when in the mountains of Killarney, in Ireland, to have been struck at seeing the peasants dance the identical jig which is still preserved after the lapse of two centuries, by the descendants of Lord Baltimore's colonists, in the south of Maryland.

Good morals are always necessary for the faithful execution of good laws; and although the former always flourish in the end under the latter, it is absurd to imagine, as the French did, that a panoply of good laws spread over the land, had the miraculous power of instantly creating good morals, as the mantle of Elijah conveyed the gift of prophecy. The vanity of a Frenchman, however, endows him with a certain self-gratulating complacency of mind, which not only prevents his believing any other nation as good as his own, but reconciles him to every thing around him; and hence I heard a gentleman, a few days since, contend that "France was too enlightened to be free." Men of this stamp have, I believe you will readily admit, about as rational an idea of liberty as Mr. Locke's blind man, who funcied that scarlet resembled the sound of a trumpet, had of colours.

When the national Convention embraced the resolution of establishing a republic in France, the manner in which they organized it was an unequivocal symptom of their ignorance of the true nature of such a government. A republic, "One and Indivisible," over an immense territory, inhabited by twenty-five millions of recently enfranchised people, of dissimilar customs and laws, and I may almost add language, is a form of government which never had, and never can have any stability or duration. Scarcely any municipal regulation can apply with equal propriety to the opposite extremes of such a community. An act which might be both just and salutary in its application to a provincial town in the plains of Belgium, or on the banks of the Rhine, might be most pernicious in its operation on one situated on the borders of the Alps, or along the

shores of the bay of Biscay. Besides, it is impossible for any one legislative body to watch over the grand interests of such a nation, and to find leisure to attend to the multifarious wants, and trifling necessities of each particular parish. I know it may be asked with seeming plausibility, why a body of national representatives is not as competent to perform all this, as the ministry of an absolute monarch? But besides that there is a much greater dispatch of business in a small and irresponsible junto than in a public assembly, where discussion consumes time, I think the difficulty is much increased by the disposition of the people themselves; for the subjects of absolute monarchs, who know reclamation to be fruitless, submissively acquiesce in innumerable hardships, petty grievances and restrictions, against any one of which, the citizens of a republic would clamour very violently You may oppose to this suggestion the republic of America, which exists over a much larger territory that this of France; but you should hold in mind that we have, independent of our Congress, some four and twenty State Legislatures, Executives, and Judiciaries, for the transaction of local business; so that none but affairs of magnitude, or of general interest, are brought before the Congress, President, and Judges of the Union. Perhaps the average duration of the session of each of these bodies is near three months in the year, and that of Congress five, so that if there was but one parliament in America, it would be necessary for it to set the whole year, and that the year should consist of seventy-six months, in order that the claims of every individual might be heard, and the general interest attended to.

It was not until after the difference of opinion between Bertrand de Moleville, and Narbonne, (on the propriety of conferring with the committee,) had dissolved the constitutional ministry in 1792, that the republican party came into power in the persons of Roland and Claviere. This party, which was known by the name of the Gironde, because its principal members came from Bordeaux, was fully sensible of the advantages of a federal republic; and for this reason alone, could not, in the actual state of the public mind in France, be considered as affording sage counsellors to the king. But whatever may have been the errors or extravagancies into which it fell from a sanguine tem-

perament of mind highly inflamed by an enthusiasm for libertywhatever may have been the visionary hopes and schemes with which the delightful indubitability of inexperience inspired it, I believe there are now none-no, not even the most ferocious libellers of republicanism, who do not acquit it of any guiltiness of design. I know that it has been fashionable in some countries-I would willingly forget that it had ever been so in mineto confound these virtuous federal republicans with the savage herd of cannibals that afterwards devoured them. The young and splendid Vergniaud, in whese character there was something of "the vast and the unbounded;" the brilliant and accomplished Condorcet, with the intelligent and enthusiastic Brissot, and all those republicans who attempted in vain to interpose the shield of mercy between the king and his vindictive assailants, have been classed with the monstrous Marat. the ferocious Robespierre, the malignant St. Just, and, if possible, the still more frantically cruel Collot D'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes.

The French, as Duclos once said, feel without thinking, act without reflecting, and propose without resolving; and hence a phrase has often been more efficacious in raising up or putting down a party among them than the strongest reasoning in the world. Now this nation never comprehended the true nature of a federal republic; and as the erection of several states looked like the division of the kingdom, which did not fall in at all with its schemes of greatness, the cry of a republic, "one and indivisible," sent the federalists to the guillotine. I am far, however, from thinking that every excess would have been avoided by the adoption of a federal government; for the situation of France offered some difficulties in the way of its establishment. To have created the provinces into republics would have been absurd in the extreme. They were too large and powerful. They had been held together by the compressing weight of despotism, but would have fallen asunder when bound only by laws. They had too respectively preserved their ancient usages and habits, and having been restrained from a free intercourse with one another, were of course full of local prejudices. These circumstances would have caused discord and dissention, instead of harmony and union, to prevail among them; and they must have finally split into independent states, hostile and destructive to the

peace and good order of one another, or fallen under the yoke of their foreign enemies. Even under the self-styled republic, such as it was, "one and indivisible," the danger of allowing such large provinces to remain entire, was so imminent, that the division of the country into eighty-three departments was one of the wisest and happiest conceptions of the new government; although it must be confessed, the refusal to call them after the capital city of each, (which would have so much facilitated the recollection of their names) indicated as stupid a fear of federalism, as the grating, dissonant names, which were selected for them, gave evidence of a poverty of invention. When one looks at the miserable appellations adopted in France and at the still more stupid custom which prevails in America, of substituting for the fine sonorous words of the Aborigines, the names of places in Europe, and of giving the same name to a dozen stifferent places, one is almost disposed to question the inventive genius of the moderns.

It was not, however, by the territorial division of the kingdom of France is to departments of an equal number of square leagues, but by dividing it as Mirabeau recommended, into proportions nearly equal in population, wealth, and importance, that the collection of taxes and the administration of justice could have been properly facilitated. Nature had created an almost insurmountable obstacle to a mathematical and ideal division, by the fertility she had given to the soil in some parts, and the sterility in others; nor did habit and circumstances oppose a less formidable barrier against it; for infinite inconvenience resulted from cutting up neighbourhoods without regard to towns, roads, and water courses. A judicious division, with due attention to density of population and fertility of soil, might have mingled the heterogeneous members of the state together and melted them down into one mass, so as to prevent the danger of dismemberment. But when statesmen forget the excellence of moderation, and act with the desperate precipitancy of mad empirics, we ought not to be surprised at their throwing their patient into convulsions by the boldness of their operations. Young politicians are naturally sanguine and full of confidence; they chase with eagerness the phantoms of their own brain; are deaf to the remonstrances of wisdom, and are only tamed in their aspirations

after change, by the disappointments of experience. Unfortunately for France, such were all her leading politicians, or they would have perceived that any other than a federal republic in their country must necessarily sting itself, like the scorpion, to death-Had each of the departments been given a legislature, an executive and judiciary, for its local concerns; and had a general government been created to superintend the general interests of the empire; for the embodying an uniform code of laws, the regulation of commerce, and the encouragement of manufactures; the opening of roads and the cutting of canals, together with the sole power of making war, and organizing the army and navy, what a world of trouble might have been spared this distracted people, and what innumerable blessings might their success have secured to mankind! The National Assembly might have become, in this case, the lever of Archimedes in politics, and Paris the centre of motion The centrifugal tendency of no department, could have interrupted its swing, since no one would have been heavy enough to impede the momentum of the whole. and the independence of each would have eloigned the danger of a factious coalition. These departmental governments would have been schools of free principles, to rear up the young men to the exercise of republican duties, and sharpen their abilities; at the same time, they would have been so many jealous eyes watching over the preservation of the public liberty, and controlling the accidental errors of one another. It would be extravagant to suppose, that the adoption of this system would have prevented all the iniquities which followed, but that it would have prevented many of them, there is no doubt. It was disdainfully rejected, however, by the Parisian mob, and in consequence of this, the only breath of freedom which this nation drew during five and twenty years of revolution, was perhaps in those intervals in which she was bounding from one despotism to another.

LETTER IX.

My DEAR SIR,

Paris, March 11th, 1820.

It was in the summer of 1792, that the clubs of Paris took the administration of the government entirely into their own hands; and it is certainly unfair to condemn the whole French nation for the atrocity of the crimes which they perpetrated. Among these clubs, that which met in the ancient convent of the Jacobins, and which triumphed over all the others, was animated by the soul of vengeance and rapine-that of the Cordeliers was inflamed by a spirit of still more brutal ferocity, and that of the Societé Fraternelle, exhaled only such an odour as might be expected to arise from the dregs of creation. Their liberty was despotism, their religion was blasphemy, and their pastime massacre. By the slaughter of the Swiss guards on the 10th of August, and the demand for a Convention which followed it, they announced to the world their assumption of absolute power into their own hands. But as the voice of the nation, in spite of the inflammatory harangues and pamphlets which were scattered abroad, and the fatal conjunction of circumstances that tended to inflame it, could never have been in unison with the yell of these wretches; the massacres of the first week of September were resolved on, to prevent the better part of the nation from voting at the elections. The consequence was, that a majority of such creatures as suited the designs of the Jacobins were returned, and the abolition of the nominally existing government was decreed the day after they assembled.

I confess I have never looked on the madness of the National Convention without feeling a sentiment of profound regret, for the wickedness of human beings; nor ever been able to remember the degraded spectacle which this great and valiant nation exhibited, whilst trampled on by its tyranny, without deep afflicwho, with restless impatience, as Madame de stael expresses it, stalked about in the Convention, like ferocious beasts in a cage, panting for carnage, should have been able to awe and terrify into submission, such a people as the French, can only be accounted for from the universal panic they inspired.

It was the misfortune of France to be overtaken by revolution when divided into two distinct bodies, the rioters in wealth, and the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Hence the spirit of liberty became converted into the rage for equality, and this overthrew every thing. It was not equality in the eye of the law, that was understood by this word; but a low and personal equality; the reducing of virtue and talents, and manners and wealth, to the level of a common standard which nature abhors, and which was not to be accomplished by the raising what was debased, but by the degrading of what was exalted. This most vulgar notion of liberty is the legitimate offspring of arbitrary government, whose object it is to bless the few at the expense of the many. But still, it has been represented by the designing advocates of passive obedience as the scion of republicanism. The moment that the flame of liberty became obscured by this smoke of equality, the Jacobins tore the reins of government out of the hands of the republicans. This Jacobinism is to republicanism, what fanaticism is to religion; and it would be as just to reproach the divine spirit of the latter with the crimes that have been committed in its name, as to upbraid the genius of freedom with the intolerance of political head-cutters. It caused the beastly frenzy of Robespierre to be mistaken for a zeal for freedom, and the blasphemous fêtes which he celebrated over the victims of his vengeance in the very palace which his prototype, Catherine of Medicis, (the fountain of French corruption) had erected, to be imagined burnt-offerings to the goddess of liberty. Yet the most enormous of all the sacrileges which made the hearts of mankind loathe for a time the character of France-the placing an actress on an ass-the presenting her, with the instruments of worship, to the Convention-the seating her on the

23

altar at Notre Dame, to be adored and honoured with incense, and covered with a shower of flowers from the hands of opera dancers, is now ascertained * to have been planned and paid for by three *ex-privilegiés*, in order to dishonour the spirit of reform by outrage, and to stifle it by disgust.

When the Society of Jacobins, which was composed of the bloodhounds of human butchery, who wore human ears for cockades, became the pretorian guards of France, they found means, by the multiplication of their clubs to have at their disposal all the vice of every individual in the kingdom. Thus president Barrere, who has since enjoyed the favour of Napoleon, and who yet lives, under the protection of the Bourbons, a scab on the French territory, expressed in a phrase almost as laconic as Nero's, his cruelty and love of confiscation—"We strike money," said he, "by the knife of the guillotine, on the Place of the Revolution, and let us sweep the earth."

There does not exist, perhaps, in all the records of rascality, so ferocious an edict as that of the Convention, which sentenced to death any French soldier or officer who should give quarter to any Englishman or Hanoverian. But how nobly contrasted was the conduct of the soldiers, who disdainfully replied, "We are Frenchmen, not assassins," with the grim ferocity of Barrere, who, in proposing that law, exclaimed, "Non, non, il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas." Such madness could only have been produced by the pressure of great attacks from without, during a state of great fermentation within. For although all respect for government had been lost in France, long before the equinoctial gales of the revolution came on, it was only the combination of all Europe to put down the revolution, and the exasperation produced by writings full of wrath and contumely against its authors, that could have "maddened the brain of all France."

The situation of the people of this country during the reign of Robespierre and terror, which lasted about fifteen months, from the end of May '93 to the end of July '94, was horrible in the extreme. It was not rank and property alone, that excited during all this time the rage of the monsters that blasted the hap-

* Lanjuinais-Constitutions, Vol. I. p. 45.

piness of France;—No! it was on virtue and talent, and beauty, that the knife of the guillotine was perpetually falling. Over all the wide extent of this country, there was nothing heard but the cry of despair;—no ray of promise fell upon the devoted land,—no light flashed across the horizon, to illumine the darkness of a region of woe, until the fall of the tyrants broke up the clouds that obscured it. But as the swell and agitation of the sea continues long after the gale is over, so there succeeded to this period of internal disaster an equally long one of anarchy and confusion before the public mind settled down into any thing like a republic.

We should remember, however, as we go along, that although there were crimes enough committed during the reign of terror to dishonor the French nation, and humble its pride; there were also a number of such actions performed, as adorn human nature and exalt its respectability. The annals of the free nations of antiquity teem, I admit, with a greater variety of heroical deeds, springing from the love of country; but I doubt whether those of any nation exhibit nobler instances of self devotion, taking their source from the sentiments which sweeten the domestic relations of society. Nor was political corruption by any means universal. Many individuals rose above the mass of political infamy that floated around them, and shewed, like dolphins, "their backs above the element they lived in." Those bright examples are more and more admired every day, and the young men of France are now learning to regard them as patterns to copy after. It is in this manner that the spirits of Malesherbes and Bailly, of Vergniaud and Lavoisier, and a host of worthies, shall yet cheer and recreate the public virtue of France.

The only government resembling a republic, that ever existed in this country, was that which prevailed in the interval between the end of the reign of anarchy, (November, '95,) and the dismemberment of the Directory, (September, '97.) It would have been no less fortunate, perhaps, for the prosperity of Europe, than for the happiness of France, if the circumstances of the times had then led to an amicable settlement of the great European quarrel. But the disposition of the French nation was yet wild and extravagant; and the government itself was estranged from conciliation by the blaze of victory, in '96. One ignis fatuus was destined to succeed to another, and the rage for equality now gave way to an enthusiasm for military glory. The revolutionary government had not yet offered any beautiful spectacle to captivate the national vanity, when the success of the armies began to lay hold on and inflame it; for in two campaigns, in Holland and Italy, these had done more than had been accomplished in ten centuries of monarchy. The triumphs of all their young generals were splendid in the extreme; but the tremendous velocity with which Bonaparte in particular, rushed from victory to victory in Italy, whilst it shewed what France was capable of under a government partially free, turned the current of the national ambition into the channel of universal conquest. This was a great misfortune at that time; for as the grand ebullition of the torrent of the revolution was then over, and as this was beginning to move with some sort of order and regularity, it was most unfortunate indeed that it should be turned into a false direction, and precipitated and broken on the rocks of ambition. But so it happened-accident substituted the chimera of glory in the place of the goddess of liberty, and the French ran after it to the brink of ruin.

Unhappily too, even England, the lever of the confederacy, was equally estranged from the spirit of peace. The mad freaks of a few radical reformers had not only alienated the public love, from the reform of which her constitution actually stood in need, but had enabled the government to hold up the horrors of a revolution as the necessary consequence of a peace with France. All the gigantic powers of Mr. Burke's eloquence were again brought to bear on this occasion. His reflections on the revolution had done much injury to France, by heating the resentful passions of those who had aided in bringing about that event, and who now controlled the public opinion; but they were scarcely so pernicious in their effects as his Letters on a Regicide Peace; for who can even conjecture the extent of human suffering, that might have been saved in Europe, if the war had ended in 1797, before a rage for conquest had swallowed up every other passion in the breasts of the French?

I do not wish, that any thing that I may say, respecting the opinions of Mr. Burke, should lead you to believe that I do not admire the splendour of his genius, and respect even the bigotry of his patriotism. But I must confess, that before I came to France, and accidentally discovered the principal source* of his information on French affairs, I was always at a loss to imagine why he should have chosen to violate justice, in pouring out at that time his most gorgeous torrent of obloquy on the head of Carnot. That Carnot was the Hercules of the war department, who organized the terrible plans of the French victories, and that in order to do this he had to descend into the committee of public safety, as into the den of Tænarus, and to perform his labours by the side of the Cerberean dogs of the revolution, is most true. Yet surely, if France has produced any man, the disinterested severity of whose character resembles that of Cato, it is Carnot; and I hope that the recollection of the injustice that has been done him, will induce you to excuse me for running a little in advance of our subject, in order to ascertain his claims on our respect. The heaviest censure that ever fell on him, was his cooperation with that bloody committee; but it is only fair to observe, that his attention was exclusively bent to the military operations of France, and that he has himself declared, that as a member of that body, he saved more lives than were sacrificed by the vengeance of Robespierre. In support of this, it may be remarked than when, after the fall of that tyrant, the majority of the national convention, which was not, God knows, given to mercy, voted an inquiry into his conduct, he was not only acquitted, but distinguished out of all active agency in the bloody deeds of the committee, and immediately after returned to the new legislative body, by no less than fifteen departments. For what then has he been so aorimoniously vilified? Was it for having denounced and

* Mr. B's principal informer, was, I am told, an Irish priest by the name of Suminers, who wrote him regularly what happened in Paris, and coloured every event after his prejudices. Summers resided and married here. He was a curious, inquisitive sort of a man, that noted down every thing he heard. He is said to have got a pension of 100!. through lord Grenville, to whom he was introduced by Mr. B.—He was finally arrested in France, in consequence of an intercepted letter from him to a secretary of lord Castlereagh; tried for it, coudemned, and shot in Paris, [after Bonaparte's return from Russia,] in the spring of 1813. prevented the passage in the convention of a decree, to send all who might plead in favour of the accused to the scaffold, that he was set up in the pillory by Mr. B., and represented as a monster filling his "bloody maw" with a thousand victims a day? Was it for the colossean energy of mind with which he directed the movements of fourteen armies, and opened to them the avenues of success, at the very time that he opposed in the cabinet the extension of the limits of France, that he has been held up to the world as the most enormous vulture that ever fed on the carcase of a ruined nation? Was it for the republican sternness which made him disdain to concur in the guilty purposes of the Directors, and which soon afterwards caused him to be expelled out of that body, and to escape transportation only by flight into Germany, that the liberty-haters have pictured him as the most grim spectre of a regicide that ever stalked over this land?

A variety of events have occurred since that time, to try the temper of men's souls, and it cannot be denied, that Carnot has passed through all of them with consistency at least. After the dissolution of the directory, Bonaparte, who possessed great tact in the discernment of spirits, recalled him from exile, and appointed him minister of war. Notwithstanding this, he was almost the only man who had the boldness to raise his voice against the consulate for life, and to oppose afterwards the crowning of Napoleon. For this preference of public over private interest, he fell of course into disrepute, and went into retirement; yet, although his name was more than once handed in on the list of conspirators, the emperor is said to have invariably stricken it out with his own hand, saying, "I do not like that man; but he is incapable of treason." During the long period in which Napoleon held victory enchained to his chariot wheels, and in his flight of triumph, was emptying the horn of plenty, on the flatterers and favorites, who were burning incense before him, Carnot still continued to live in retirement. But when the ambitious charioteer had driven France too far, and was himself grown giddy from excess of height; when he came rattling down from his elevation, with a velocity that threatened to shatter the chariot of state, and when the gilded companions of his career were seen running away, like water from around him, it was then only

that Carnot came forward to his assistance, not to bask in the sunshine of imperial prosperity, but like the Spartan that went to Thermopolæ, to save his country. As governor of Antwerp, he disdained to follow the example of Davoust at Hamburg, in levelling for his convenience the suburbs of the city, and would never lower his flag, until he heard the shout of rejoicing that passed over France at the termination of the war. The Bourbons continued him in power after the restoration, and when the minions of the court were beginning to violate without scruple the pledges of the royal faith, he alone had the unwelcome honesty to warn the king that an infraction of the charter might be the grave of his dynasty. This tragic prediction served the courtiers to mock at, until it was fulfilled. The court however, have not forgiven Carnot that act of republican frankness-nay they never will forgive him, for it sins against their code of morality, and as they are not disposed to allow him any Delphian inspiration on the occasion, and are fond of having their reasoning end, like the "year in its own circle," they say that the prediction produced its own verification. When Bonaparte reappeared at the Tuileries, in March 1815, Carnot consented to come again into the ministry, in the hope, as he expressed it, of doing good, for he believed Napoleon had come back disposed to preserve peace, and to reign constitutionally. And some good he did do-for at a time when the youth of this country were on fire, and the spirit of chivalry flew all over France, like flame over the surface of spirituous liquor; when one might have supposed all the world occupied in military arrangements, he found leisure to encourage industry, and to introduce a permanent blessing to the lower classes of society, the Lancastrian mode of mutual instruction. That Carnot is a man of extraordinary sternness of character, and that he has drawn many of his principles of duty, from those severer acts of public virtue in history, which stagger our humanity, whilst they satisfy our sense of justice, is unquestionably true. Without this he could never have consented to act in seeming concurrence with the revolutionary committee, in order to impede its career of extermination; for such were the fiends that inhabited that den of iniquity, that no one could enter and come out of it, without leaving the skirts of his character at least in the

hands of dishonour. His defence of Varennes and D'Herbois would admit of no apology, I confess, if there were not some circumstances which justify the belief that it proceeded from gratitude for their having saved his life, or from a view to self preservation. But whatever doubts may assail the propriety of these actions, I can never believe that he, who has come out of the revolution, with no more fortune than he carried into it, is tainted with rapacity; nor with low ambition neither, since he never sought a lead in public affairs, except when the only reward he could expect was, not splendour and applause, but danger, poverty and fame. For what he has done'he is driven into exile among the Poles, and has seated himself amid the ruins of a condemned, but noble people; and he there enjoys the contempt of those who having adored Bonaparte, now worship the Bourbons; as well as the respect of his countrymen, and as he assures the world the approbation of his own conscience.*

> Ille potens sui Lætusque deget, cui liset in diem Dixisse, vixi. HORACE.

There existed on the continent of Europe, when the French revolution broke out, three powers, either of which was deemed a match for France. Two of them, Russia and Prussia, had grown up to greatness, since the time of Louis XIV., and yet so perfect seemed to be the equilibrium of the balance of power, that the dread of universal conquest was never more absent from the minds of men. Wars which had been carried on among the ancient nations with an eye to conquest, and among those of the middle ages from the excitements of religious zeal, had become in the last century, a sort of heroic pastime, in which armies met, and after slaughtering each other for a while, sat down on the field of battle; whilst ministers assembled, to discuss and settle the limits of some commercial privilege. But the enthusiasm which sprung up with the disturbances in France, awoke in the military a spirit which had slept for ages. To citizen soldiers

* In 1815, when the registed Fouché was minister, Carnot was banished, and after he received orders to quit France, he is said to have written the following laconic letter to Fouche, "Traitre, où veus tu que j' aille?" And to have received this characteristic answer from the triumphant wretch; "Où vous voulez, imbecille."—Republicans were then exil d, but Jacobins were spared: (arnot was or dered away, but such hyenas as Barrere were suffered to remain in France.

1

who felt themselves always exposed to the terrible vengeance of their enemies, fortitude and valour were indispensable; and as every Frenchman soon fancied, that in fighting for his country he was fighting for himself, each army became inspired with an energy, which the discipline of mercenary troops, could neither overcome, nor withstand. Hence in the beginning of the war the Allied armies that were ordered on to a career of easy triumph, recoiled, overwhelmed with disaster and disgrace;-hence the neighbouring nations were astonished, when they saw the whole frontier of France encircled with a belt of bayonets, and hence a feeling of despondency shook the very heart of Europe, when soon after, the victorious cannon of France were heard at the same time, along the shores of the Zuyder Zee, and down the banks of the Danube; on the plains of Italy, and among the mountains of the Pyrennees. Happy would it have been for the destinies of the world if the war had ended then. The soldiers of France yet retained the sentiments of citizens, and they might have returned back into the bosom of their country, satisfied with their measure of glory, and zealous only for the establishment of liberty. Better terms than those which were five years afterwards accepted at Amiens, might have been obtained in 1797; but those politicians, whose interest it was to preserve the ancient institutions of Europe, succeeded in inspiring a general belief that exertions as prodigious as those of France would be necessarily followed in a short time, by extreme debility; as the wave which is driven up highest on the beach only rolls back the faster when exhausted, and leaves a larger portion of the strand bare From this idle idea the war was continued; and when the French perceived that it could not end, so long as they were resolved to hold, what their silly elation of mind would never suffer them to think of yielding, they sat themselves down to the contemplation of conquest, as the noblest of all glories. As they could not excel other nations in the art of government, they sought satisfaction in beating them; and this martial spirit transmitted the sceptre of France in a short time, from the pikes of the mob to the bayonets of the army. The just understanding of free government, can only be acquired in the school of experience, and hence the French were entirely without it. The good sense of a few patriots, occasionally shot a few rays of light across their political herizon; but like rockets at

night, these only served to render the general darkness more evident. Indeed I am by no means disposed to believe the French endowed with that promptitude of mind in the embracing new doctrines and habits, which the lightness and frivolity of their manners have led many to imagine. Susceptible of vehement inspirations they certainly are, but difficulties soon fatigue them. No people have shown less capacity for innovation, or fitness for establishing colonies, than they. In America, for example, whilst the English and other nations, have bent with facility to circumstances, and not resisted the adoption of evident improvements, beyond the second or third generation, the French in Canada retain pretty much the usages they carried over with them two centuries ago; and in the war of Independence, they only continued obedient to Great Britain. This may arise from the peculiar pleasantness of their social habits; or from the custom in absolute monarchies of cultivating Imagination in preference to Reason.

Throughout the revolution in France, the French prattled as much about liberty as if they really possessed it; and still their proneness to passive obedience often showed itself in ridiculous contrast with their feverish affectation of equality. When Augereau came to Paris in '97, to overthrow the constitution by military force, and was asked whether Bonaparte had not an idea of making himself king of Italy, he was so well drilled in republican phraseology, as to reply, "he is a young man too well bred for that." Many discoveries are now daily brought to light, which go to prove a constant tendency in this nation to relapse into monarchy. There is even reason to believe, that at the very moment the Directory were declaring, not only that royalty was done over forever in France, but that those men who had fancied themselves delegated by heaven to oppress her could never show their faces here again, a part of that very body was conspiring to bring back the old government. It was not attachment to liberty, but the powerful impediment which the private interests of individuals opposed to this scheme, that prevented its execution. To the general mind the word restoration conveyed the idea of counter-revolution, or the re-establishment of every thing as it had been. Now the division and sale of the lands of the church, of the emigrants, and of the crown, had thrown them into numerous hands; and the removal of every barrier. except want of talent, to promotion in the army or state, had brought many into office, and flattered many more with the hope of distinction. If the nation could have been guaranteed against these advantages, the recal of the Bourbons would have followed in the first interval of repose after the convulsions of jacobinism were over. Those who have contemplated the French nation only at a distance, by the signs which have reached them through the false medium of the Paris journals, or the distorting atmosphere of the British gazettes, may be of a different opinion) but it is impossible to mix long with this people, and to study its dispositions by such lights as conversation and books throw out, without coming to that conclusion. An honest attachment to liberty is always firm but never turbulent; for opinions which are violent are bottomed on passion, not on principle. Now the French were so frantic in their love of liberty, that Tom Paine, who was the most extravagant democrat in America, was a man of such exceeding moderation here, that they would not listen to him when he proposed to make a present of the King and royal family to the Americans. The fact is, that although the storm of the revolution laid prostrate every institution in this realm, it did not destroy the monarchical habits of the people. When the violence of the gale came on, such opinions, fled for concealment into the recesses of every man's mind; but they lay there as in their hiding places, ready to come out on the first occasion; and so they did, like those crucifixes, images, and pictures of the royal family, which, until the restoration, were supposed to have been broken and destroyed. The men who felt most conscious of the concealment of such desires, pretended to be most infatuated with liberty; for knowing themselves to be hypocrites, they suspected their neighbours of being so likewise, and hence originated the foul system of punishment on suspicion.

The fierce and ferocious intolerance of Jacobinism did irreparable injury to the cause of liberty. By banishing from social intercourse that tranquillity which is the solace of age, and that candour and security without which existence is no blessing, it destroyed the charm of domestic life; and by holding up a spectacle of discord and cruelty as the necessary consequence of a republic, it disgusted many even with liberty itself. The atro-

cious system of domiciliary visits, and the license of suspicion, which unbridled all the vice of society to devour all its virtue, and which were in themselves the legitimate offspring of that anarchical tyranny which the French mistook for freedom, caused most good men to regret the comparative happiness they had enjoyed under the old government, and to wish for its restoration. Their tree of liberty had blossomed superbly, it is true, but it had hitherto brought forth nothing but bitter fruit. Laws and constitutions alone never did, nor ever can, create a republic-they may ordain its existence and model its parts, but unless education has nursed up to proper vigeur the sentiment of public virtue, a nation may adopt a republican constitution of government, but will never preserve it. "Liberty," said Lord Bolingbroke, "is a tender plant, which will not flourish unless the genius of the soil be proper for it, nor will any soil continue to be so long, which is not cultivated with incessant care." Ia France its seeds were scattered loosely over the soil, without any previous preparation to receive them-they quickened, I admit, but had not time to take any deep root before the ignorat hands that went out to cultivate them, mistook them, for the noxious weeds that had sprung up plentifully enough along with them, and destroyed them together.

The vanity of living at Coart, and the silly ambition of being thought to possess its favours, had made the French the light and frivolous people they were before the revolution; and we know that vanity and frivolity are not republican virtues.--When, therefore, Madame de Stael said, that power depraved the French more than other men, she mistook an apparent for a real cause; since if the habits of education and the example of the court had, in the minds of Frenchmen, so worn the links of the chain of principle, that they were ready to give way the moment they were put in use, it is not to the cause which tightened, but to that which weakened them, that the defect is ascribable. As the court had never recognized any other proof of merit than success, a good fame had been of little or no importance; and lacitus has said, perhaps with trath, "contempta famse, contemni, virtutem."

LETTER X.

Paris, March 16th, 1990.

My DEAR SIR,

The dismemberment of the Directory in 1797, was fatal to the cause of republicanism in France. The democratical despots who usurped the administration of the government, scoffed at rational liberty, and transported many of its best friends out of France, to pine and perish in the pestilential heats of Cay-They quarrelled with America; invaded Switzerlands enne. made a mad expedition into Egypt, and lost the ascendancy in Italy. The nation breathed somewhat more freely, it is true, under the irregular pressure of their tyranny, than during the hot collision of '98, but it became every day more and more fatigated by a political system, whose schemes were disastrous abcoad and dis-When under their direction, General Bonegraceful at home. parte discovered the invasion of England to be an experiment toe perilous for his ambition, and that he had not yet sufficient weight of reputation to stand in balance against the Directury, he planned, with romantic audacity, the conquest of Egypt and India. The society of scientific men, which he gathered around him on this occasion, gave a moral splendour to the enterprize, which no other military crusade ever pessessed, and he knew full well that the natural propensity of mankind to exalt what. ever is at a distance, would induce them to exaggerate the magnitude of his exploits, and give to his name an expansive power on the national vanity. He rightly conjectured, that whilst his rivals were exhausting the measure of their popularity at home, it might be easy, if the expedition were unfortunate, to attribute the calamity to them; and should it prove successful, he might erect for himself a civilized kingdom in the land of the Ptolomies, and afterwards, according to the prosperity of circumstances, extend the horizon of his ambition. But perhaps, anhappidy

5

for the future tranquillity of the world, and the progress of political reformation, the navy of England overtook his expedition at the mouths of the Nile. The victory of Aboukir not only destroyed the machinery of his philosophers, but deprived him of the means of procuring such reinforcements as might have established his colony, and kept him forever after amused by visions of oriental conquest. The loss of his fleet relieved him from blame for the failure of the expedition; the idle triumphs of his arms elated the vanity of his nation; and his opportune return to France at the moment of general dissatisfaction with the Directory, aided the projects of his ambition. He presently succeeded, therefore, in taking the government into his own hands, in order, as he declared, to consecrate the sovereignty of the people, and secure the eternal triumph of liberty and equality.

As he was a man who considered mankind as nothing, and himself as every thing, his military mutilation of the constitution saved in appearance, but ruined in reality, the liberties of France. The new Consular Constitution, by reserving to him the sole right of initiating or proposing a law, put the legislative nower absolutely into his hands; and by investing him only with the right of ordering the prosecution of the executive officers of government, clothed him with a power as odious and despotical as that of the old regime, and to which nothing but the blaze of glory which then environed him, could have reconciled the French people. It is somewhat remarkable, that the day on which this Consular Constitution was proclaimed, and Bonaparte entered on his career of tyranny, (the 14th of December, 1799,) was the day in which Washington, the noblest friend of liberty that the revolutions of the world have produced, expired in another hemisphere. It would seem indeed, to have been a day on which "freedom shrieked, and hope for a season bade the world farewell."

During the first two years of the Consular Government, however, France had cause to rejoice at the ascendancy of Bonsparte. His exertions to restore her internal tranquillity, and her external greatness, were praiseworthy in the extreme; and his merit in these particulars has been much overlooked, especially by the accomplished Madame de Stael. As I by no means think the French people so unjustifiably fickle as their frequent

changes of government have led many to imagine, inasmuch as great restlessness and frequent change of position are natural in a suffering body, I must beg your particular attention to the confusion and disorder that prevailed in France at the close of ²99, and the masterly ability with which Bonaparte allayed them before the peace of Amiens in 1802. When he returned from Egypt, not only were the French armies fast retreating before those of the Allies, and the whole of the brilliant conquests he had made in Italy in '96, lost by a series of defeats; but the navy of France was destroyed-her commerce annihilated-a civil war organized in more than one fourth of the departments, and the spirit of insurrection daily breaking out in the others. The highways were so infested by gangs of robbers and assassins,* that the funds of the public treasury, if they had not been already pillaged in the houses of the receivers of the revenue, could but seldom reach the capital in safety. The nation was scourged by at least two most odious laws, those of "hostages, and forced loans," and threatened at the same time by the villanous canaille of Paris, with an agrarian division of property. The national treasury was exhausted without the means of replenishing itself, and had been saved from the opprobrium of bankruptcy only by the most violent exactions. The Directors themselves, at the head of the government, were without energy of will or harmony of opinion, and alternately the sport of either party, as the majority happened to fluctuate in the two councils; whilst the sound part of the nation, the friends of law and rational liberty were wandering in exile, or condemned at home to an impotent neutrality. Such was the condition of France after ten years of trouble and convulsion. In addition to these public grievances, the spirits of men were so worn down and fatigued by insecurity of life and property, that they longed for repose, and would have been pleased with the consolidation of any government that promised to be durable. Some wished to get back again such of their friends as proscription had chased out of the country, whilst others desired a solid guarantee for the acquisitions they had made of national or church property. Many trembled at the remembrance of the reign of terror, and many perhaps preferred the inglorious tranquillity of the old regime,

* See Lacretelle.

to the perilous vicissitudes of the new Commonwealth. Hence it has been confidently asserted, that Bonaparte was aided in his conspiracy against the Directory by many who imagined him about to play the contemptible part of General Monk, in the ignominious surrender of the rights of England. But whatever may have been the conjunction of circumstances that enabled him to concentrate so much influence in his own person, he made use of it to great advantage; first, in the energy with which he embraced, on coming to the head of affairs, the most vigorous schemes for the re-organization of the nation; and secondly, for the meteor-like rapidity of his military movements, from the camp at Dijon to the glacier summits of St. Bernard; and from the hot encounters of Montebello to that explosion of victory, the battle of Marengo. Nor can he be too much admired for the ability with which he directed the other armies of the republic; for that ray of his genius which enabled Massem to force back the hitherto victorious Suwarrow into the wilds of Russia,-for the power which he communicated to Brune, of driving the Duke of York to capitulation at Alckmaër, -- and for the judgment with which he directed the march of Moreau, till this general met the chivalry of Germany at Linden, and commanded his "fires of death to light the darkness of her setnery."

Whilst these victories acted as a wand to enchant the judg ments of the whole French people, and to turn their meditations on war, the vigour with which he tranquilized the spirit of faction at home, and the regular motions which he communicated to the sinews and nerves of the state, were no less conspicuous and extraordinary. The law re-assumed its dominion .- the roving parties of brigands were put down,-the canaille of Paris were set to work,---the manufacturers of the commonwealth were encouraged,---its agriculture revived,---its revenue began to flow in with an augmenting stream,---the virtuous emigrants who had been driven out of their country by tyranny, returned-and the whole scene of France began to exhibit an uniform prospect of prosperity. In this pleasing condition of things, the First Consul showed himself very moderate, and seemingly animated by a desire of peace, even in the second year of his triumphant car reer. The allies, and even England herself, were now pretty

well tired of the experiment of war; for although the Tower guns had announced many a victory, the nation found, in looking on the map of Europe, that France, so far from being "blotted out of it," had gone on devouring a kingdom a year. The consequence was, that Mr. Pitt, whose great abilities had hitherto supported the burthen of the war, retired from office, and the peace of 1802 was immediately concluded. This peace of Amiens might possibly have lasted longer, if the intercourse which it opened with France, had not shown the resources of this country to be terribly augmented. When Mr. Burke, in the beginning of the revolution, had called France a mere mountain of ruins, and Mirabeau, with more prophetic inspiration had exclaimed, that if a mountain, it was a volcano,---though no foreigners believed him, yet now that the prophecy had come to pass, all the world thought the volcano had nearly burnt itself out; so that, after a little repose, it would be incapable of any further eruption. It was not, therefore, a very satisfactory spectacle to the nations of Europe, to behold this gigantic commonwealth sitting down soberly in the midst of them, to recruit its energies, and to spread abroad the contagion of revolution. The First Consul also, had too profound a knowledge of the principles of human nature, not to be aware, that the minds of men would naturally, in the tranquillity of peace, turn to the contemplation of the art of government, and discern the stratagems by which he meant to consolidate his power. Had he been actuated at that time by a proud enthusiasm for the principles on which are founded the happiness and dignity of mankind,had he possessed liberality enough to discard a vulgar infatuation with despotism, and been warmed by a generous ambition to be really great, he might have accomplished more in the course of his life for the good of Europe, and the civilization of mankind, than any hero or statesman that the world has ever produced. But even before he came into the possession of imperial power, he had adopted as the basis of his political policy, those principles of profound cunning which Machiavel has so acutely laid down and commented on. He had learned from him * that a man who is wicked enough to wish to overthrow the liberties of his country, and to establish a despotism for himself,

* See Commentary on Livy.

25

cannot be, and to maintain his power must not be, delicate is soiling himself with crimes; that he should root out every vetige of freedom, in order to render every thing around him as new as his own authority; and permit no rank, honour or wealth to be enjoyed, which did not flow from himself; that he should adopt Philip of Macedon (who drove his people, like flocks of cattle, from one province to another,) as his guide; and like David, load the needy with favours, whilst he sent away the rick empty-handed. Napoleon made the world drink deep of the cup of tyranny, which he filled at the fountain of such principles; and when he had forced it down to the very dregs, he discovered that the draught was as fatal to himself as it was to others.

His contempt for human nature, is a vice I shall neither attempt to extenuate nor to disguise; but surely you will admit, that if there ever were circumstances that could justify this impression, they were those which produced it in the mind of Napoleon. In France, Italy, Egypt, and Syria, the only countries he had visited, he had found mankind voluptuaries in nothing but vice. He was very young when he saw the French presented with the »blest opportunity that any nation could desire of perfecting their political institutions, and shewing to advantage the best virtues of the human heart. So far from having embraced it, he had see them on all occasions rushing forward to the violation of every principle held sacred among men; and hunting down every being that dared to let slip a principle of justice, or a sentiment of humanity. He was not very deeply skilled in the lore of antiquity, nor in the history of the brighter ages of the world; but with the obliquities of Italian morality he had some acquain. tance, and wherever he dipped into the history of the French, during the hard times of the ancient regime, he must have found its pages too often soiled by venefice. assassinations, and all the " old entanglements of iniquity." He must have seen her Du Gueslins and her Bayards, her Hospitals and Auguesessi, rewarded rather by the admiration of posterity, than by the beneficence of their contemporaries. His would have been a novel career of glory indeed-the discovery to the old world, of a new continent in politics; but independent of the inaptitude of the French, as he imagined for freedom, the reward of such an en-

terprize, (where so many corvupt men were looking for preferment,) was at least problematical. It is somewhat surprising that although the French have displayed a fine capacity for imitation, and the brilliant embellishment of every thing, none of the great discoveries of modern times are theirs. The art of printing, the mariners compass, the new world, the true system of the universe, gun-powder, steam engines, glass and telescopes, the liberty of the press, habses corpus, tagether with the true principles of government have all originated among other nations. One genius indeed did arise to glorify France, but the convention which pretended to hold the inquisition in abhorrence, for condemning the discoveries of Gallileo, interrupted with still harsher cruelty the inquiries of Lavoisier. Like all intolerent persecutors, they were incapable of appreciating the greatness of his merit; and in order to reduce the aspirations of his heavenly genius, to the level of their vulgar equality, or to confiscate the funds destined for his experiments, (humanity might disdain to remember which,) they cut short the glory of his career, by the knife of the guillotine. Besides, there was another circumstance not very encouraging to the cresciveness of genuine ambition in Bonaparte; the recollection that the French had never had but one true hero for a king, and that he had been warred against and finally assassinated. It might admit of much doubt too, how far the nation he had to direct, reared up under a despotism, which deadened the sense of right and wrong; or in a revolution, whose rapine and cruelty, seemed to have battered to pieces every principle of justice; how far I say, such a nation in the state of chaos and anarchy, in which he found it, was capable of being restrained by wise laws and a gentle administration. The national love had not in fact shewn itself an element sufficiently dense to buoy up the reputation of any good man for any length of time; and it might have admitted in his mind, of very serious doubt, whether he himself could swim long in that hurricane season of faction, unless he secured the national vanity as his ballast. It was this very vanity which had supported royalty many years in France; for when the wits of the last century, by holding up the mirror of truth to common sense, exhibited the pageant of royalty, disrobed of the illusions of vanity, and succeeded in destroying the imaginary identity of every Frenchman with his king, every one then

became disgusted with those very follies which they had applanded so long as they fancied them in some degree their own. This foppish vanity, however, had not been done away with by the increase of the sense of personal dignity, but by derision and ridicule; so that it was ready to return the moment its object became too powerful to be laughed at.

The almost miraculous celerity of Bonaparte's military movements, and the equally admirable promptitude with which he allayed the internal disorders of the commonwealth, together with that large munificence, with which he patronized learning and talents, and perhaps also the peculiar cast of his own genius; his laconic brilliancy of thought, which so, frequently broke out with an air of sublimity, served to enchant the imaginations of this people. That address of his to the army in Egypt, when in pointing to the Pyramids, he called on them to remember that the eyes of 4000 years were upon them; and that expression in his letter of condolence, to the mother of Dessaix, in which he says, "I have commanded a monument to be erected to him on the summit of the Alps, that it may overlook at the same time, conquered Italy, and regenerated France," together with many others of a like character, which have enabled the whipster politicians of the day, to upbraid him with Charlatanism, do on the contrary very clearly shew, that he sounded most judiciously the bottom of the French character, and possessed a sagacious tact in letting go his anchor on the proper ground.

W ithout therefore meaning to offer any apology, for the temper of mind which determined Bonaparte, to seek a "bad eminence" among men, I think it results from these reflections, that his errour was less atrocious than that of any conqueror or conspirator, who has ever overthrown or undermined the liberty of a nation. Others, to be sure, have been more fortunate in having had their tyrannies most mercifully forgotten, and their guilty heroism glossed over by the admiration of mankind; whilst even justice has been refused to Bonaparte.

Is there any impartial man, who can put the attack on the Orangerie at St. Cloud, in balance with the passage of the Rubicon, or fancy there was more affectation in his clemency to Moreau than in the Roman usurper in turning his back on the head of Pompey? Was the neglect with which he treated the

friends of French freedom, as atrocious as the proscriptions of Augustus; or the sacrifice, after a trial at Vincennes, of the Duc D'Enghein, who was plotting his ruin (even if it was not occasioned by Talleyrand,) as infamous as the assassination of Cicero in the delicious plains of his Formian villa. Did his panders and parasites, like those of Augustus, ransack his capital for beautiful females, and violate the sacred modesty of nature to see what might suit the voracity of his lust? Was his invasion of Russia as useless, and inspired by as guilty an ambition, as the march of Alexander into Asia? Did he burn any Persepolis to gratify the caprice of a Thais; or did he slay any Clytus in the delirium of a "drunken brawl?" Did he behead five thousand five hundred Saxons in a day, or put out the eyes of his relations, like the illustrious Charlemagne? Did he put fire to a whole province in the depth of winter for his amusement, or hunt down, with fire and sword, his protestant subjects like Louis le Grand? Were his prospects of general conquest more gloomy than those of Charles V. or his confinement of Pius VII. in France, whilst he renovated the unhappy city of Rome, as hypocritical and base as the sacking and bloody pillage of this city by that prince? Was the obstinacy that ruined him less glorious than that of Charles XII. or his rage for embroiling nations more selfish than that of Frederick the Great? Was his seizure of the worn-out despotism of Spain less justifiable than the partition of the factious commonweath of Poland? Was his political anatomy in carving out the confederation of the Rhine, more criminal than that of the Congress of Vienna, in the dismemberment of Saxony, because, as Talleyrand sarcastically observed to that body, her monarch, in abandoning Napoleon, happened to let his watch run a quarter of an hour slower than his neighbours? Or was the mediation of Switzerland less warrantable than the delivery of Genoa and Venice into the withering hands of Sardinia and Austria? Did his return from Elba, when Europe was discussing the propriety of forcing him thence, more rudely violate the principles of legitimacy than the invasion of England by William and Mary, who, in spite of that event, and of the battle of the Boyne, are of "blessed memory?"-Was the amnesty he promised on his return into France, less scrupulously observed than that of the Legitimates after the

restoration; or does the manner in which he suppressed the insurrection in the south, cause spectres to start up in the memory, like the name of Culloden?

To political maniacs, (for such there are even at this late day who profess the doctrine of divine indefeisible hereditary right) I would not address such questions; but to a royalist in the exercise of his reason—to a man who can see no difference between the violation of a right inherited and that of one fairly acquired; to whom the flight of James into France, or of Louis into Flanders, or of Napoleon into Elba, is the same sort of thing; I believe I might ask these questions without offence, and that they would tend rather to allay the heat of prejudice than to inflame it. I have not much affection, I confess, for great conquerors; they have ever appeared to me a very infamous class of men, and although it be natural, that admiration for the talents of a great person should draw after it some respect for his character, I have always been surprised at the proneness of mankind in contemplating the splendour of wickedness, to forget its enormity.

LETTER XI.

Paris, March 21st, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

When the first Consul planned the re-establishment of a regular despotism in France he knew full well that the fabric, he was about to erect, was abhorrent to the principles of common sense, and could never be consolidated on any other foundation than that of ignorance or depravity. Although the activity of his life had never left him much leisure, he was become profound in the science of politics, and had too quick and comprehensive a mind not to perceive that since the fall of the Roman Empire, the governments of Europe (under the influence of general causes) had passed through two changes and were now entering on the third. That the first consequence of the falling to pieces of that grand incorporation of nations had been the partition of each state that acquired its independence into little principalities. which led to the domination of the nobles during the feudal ages of barbarism and rapine; and which domination might have perpetuated the mental famine of Europe even to the present time, but for the waste of the fortunes and of the lives of many of these petty tyrants during the holy wars.-That the loss of the independence of the nobles had led to the assumption of power into the hands of kings, and to the exercise of a tyranny, more or less severe according to the curb which the condition of the nobility or people may have enabled them to put on the arbitrary impetuosity of their monarchs -And thirdly that the pressure of these bad governments had been greatly mitigated of late years, and was daily undergoing great diminution from the progress of knowledge, and the increase of affluence, arising from the protection of industry under every regular government. As he knew that these causes had given that impulse to civilization which overthrew the old fabric of monarchy of France, he must

have been aware that to build it .up again, (in spite of the national distaste which was then loathing liberty very violently) it was necessary to re-barbarize the nation or to poison the air that was vivifying the public morals; and thus to found on corruption what had been formerly bottomed on ignorance. The first was not only a work of infinite labour and slow operation, if indeed it might be accomplished at all, but it was one which could be done only by dastardly and ignoble means, which had nothing in them of the seducing brightness of false glory to decoy and deceive. But a generous people like the French, full of vanity and enchanted with brilliancy, might be easily allured into corruption by the false lights of stars and ribbons and rapine and military glory. As we have already seen, therefore, some of the arts by which Bonaparte won to himself the affection of this nation, let us now look a little into the policy which he adopted to preserve it; in order to determine whether or no the French can be exonerated from the charge of unjust instability in their attachment to this extraordinary person.

In order to keep up appearances and to gull the credulity of shallow thinkers, Bonaparte preserved in his new consular constitution a legislative body; and placed it in a building that was an admirable symbol of it, for this exhibits a magnificent front of crowded columns without any solid body discernable behind them. The majority of his new senate were of course obedient to his will and under the pretence of "organizing liberty" began the consolidation of his government by a list of proscription. At the same time, however, that the ardent admirers of just government were, (in the canting phrase of Parisian mockery) sent on their travels, and the milder republicans ordered to breathe the air of the country, the more polished chevaliers of the old school, who had shewn an inflexible adherence to the doctrines of monarchy, were recalled home to constitute the "corinthian capitals" of the imperial edifice. Had this recal been unconnected with any after thought, it would have been an act of substantial justice, and deservedly hailed by the nation as a proof of a merciful and magnanimous disposition; since an infinite number of good, great, and amiable qualities belonged to those distinguished persons whom Jacobinism hunted out of France. But I fear there is too much reason to believe that the

generous clemency of Napoleon on this occasion was measured out by the calculations of self interest, and that he designed in assassinating the liberties of France, to imitate that tyrant of antiquity, who wreathed with flowers the dagger with which he struck his victims. It is somewhat remarkable, however, that men of sense, whose attention had been long turned to the contemplation of political signs, should not have perceived, in the general contexture of his policy, the ultimate object of his ambition; yet even Mr. Neckar, with all his practical good sense, wrote for the study of Bonaparte, in the third year of his consulate, an eulogium on a republic, one and indivisible, for France. To speak figuratively, that statesman seems rather to have fixed his eyes, during his retirement at Coppet, on the glittering pinnacles of the glaciers of Mont Blanc, than on the busy scene of real life that lay spread in prospect immediately before him, along the shores of Lake Leman. In planning his visionary scheme of government, he did not observe that the crown of France, which he had left on the pikes of the canaille. of Paris, had first passed to the bayonets of the army, and was fixed then to the point of a conqueror's sword, where the temper of the nation, now wearied out with experiment, and soured by disappointment, was most likely to keep it; since the repose of despetism hath something captivating in it to those, who are fatigued with the commotions of anarchy.

Notwithstanding Bonaparte's great, and hitherto well deserved popularity, and the immense means of warping the opinions of individuals that were placed at his disposal by the consular government, he found it very difficult to secure at all times, a majority ready to second his designs, and he therefore resorted to clandestine means of undermining the public will. For this reason he never forged a link in the chain of despotism, but under the show of liberality. "Do you wish me to deliver you over to the Jacobins" said he, and the general dread of the assaults of these wretches on the public weal, immediately tolerated the practice of impudent frauds in the elections, and the return of the creatures of government, without regard to the voice of the real electors. "Do you wish your senators to be beggars," said he, and this authorized the pretended reward of their patriotism by lucrative offices, created expressly to excite among them by the temptations of venality, an emulation in obedience. The trial by jusy was retained, (and still exists,) as an engine of oppression—the jurors were selected by the accusing authority, and yet even this lever of tyranny was not found sufficiently supple to keep pace with the velocity of Napoleon's views, and therefore under the cloak of avoiding dangerous excitements of the public mind, all offences against the state, were reserved to be tried by special tribunals, or "commissions extraordinaires,"* to execute orders under the semblance of equity.

Mr. Locke once said, there existed no truth which might not lead to errour, no remedy which might not become a poison, and he might have added, no engine of civilization, which might not be converted into an agent of barbarism. Thus the press, which when unfettered, sheds illumination over a nation, becomes when monopolized by government the most powerful instrument of debasement. The office of the Censors, whose duty it is to approve a work, or to condemn it to annihilation, would be useless, if it were not the object of their institutors to make "the worse appear the better reason." As there is nothing so beautiful as truth, and as nothing which is beautiful can hate the light, that which is true has no necessity for concealment.

> Le faux est toujours fade, canayeax, languissant; Mais la nature est vrai et d'abord en le sont. HOILEAU,

Hence in every country which enjoys the liberty of the press, truth ultimately triumphs over falsehood, and mankind having confidence in the lights which fall within their observation, reciprocally instruct each other. For the want of it in France, I doubt whether a single change of government, since the second year of her revolution, was made with the approbation of the majority of the nation, (the first Directory perhaps alone excepted.) A people who voted like those of France did for the consulate for life, (when Bonaparte appealed to the communes for what was not to be obtained from the senate,) who were actuated by the dread of consequences, and who felt the sword of Damocles suspended, if not over their lives, certainly over their prosperity, cannot be supposed to have expressed the honest dictates of their hearts.

Those who reside in countries in which justice has prevailed and tyranny been unknown for ages, are strangers even in thought to

* Lanjuinais. Constitutions de tous les peuples. 1 vol.

the insolence with which the agents of arbitrary government exercise their authority. In America and England the bench acts, in criminal cases, as the protector of the accused, and with an air of merciful solicitude, frequently cautions him against imprudent declarations; but even yet in France, the angry sternness of the judge, resembles the unrelenting severity of a prosecutor, and might almost lead a stranger to imagine, that the condemnation of the accused, was a triumph to the bench. But the most insupportable part of despotism, is that retail of tyranny which comes from the hands of petty officers, who trample justice and innocence under foot, on the pretence of serving the state; and whose impupunity is always secure, from the circuition of the process and the arrogant impatience of the authorities to which they are amenable. The prefects, sub-prefects, and mayors of the departments, arrondissements and communes of France, are creatures of the crown, and little tyrants of this kind. Bonaparte borrowed his idea of prefects from the practice of the Roman emperors, and it is one in perfect accordance with the spirit of military despotism. The intendants of the provinces under the old regime, the prefects of Napoleon, the satraps of Persia, and the pachas of the Grand Seigneur, are all the same sort of tyrants, under different appellations. In America, where the public agents are chosen, either directly or indirectly by the people, the good opinion of the neighbourhood is of some importance, and therefore officers dare not abuse their trust, nor forget the rights and feelings of their fellow eitizens; but here in France, where they all emanate from the throne, and where the people have been from time immemorial, accustomed to regard them as rays of royalty, each civil officer is but too apt to become impertinent and arbitrary, the moment he is invested with a power, whose limits he knows are not exactly defined by law, nor its exercise curbed by responsibility.

With a view of rendering the administration of justice still more subservient to the wishes of government, the members of the bar were deprived of all freedom, and admitted to it, only when their political opinions were in unison with those of the government. In this manner, says the venerable Lanjuinais, the bar, that brilliant asylum of liberal doctrines and civil courage, resounded only with the accents of servitude, so that even since the restoration, advocates have thought it a recommendation to declare them

The members of the Institute of arts and sciences were prohibited from reading memoirs on political and moral subjects; and the privilege of selecting the members of this body, together with the distribution of the funds destined for the encouragement of men of letters, were put into the hands of the minister of police. In the colleges of the empire too, although great encouragement was given to the study of Physics, the cultivation of those moral sciences, which mend the heart and render its principles erect and noble, was discountenanced. It is even said, that high swelling sentiments of personal independence and lofty praises of liberty were stricken out of the ancient classics, as the portraits of Brutus and Cassius were from the gallery of the Roman Emperors, and as their busts, which general Bonaparte sent from Italy, to adorn the chamber of the 500, were removed from the legislative hall of Napoleon. The young pupils were thus inspired by the ancient authors, with an admiration only of military glory, and a contempt for the rights of mankind.

Napoleon deserves great credit for the re-establishment of religion, with toleration in France; as well as for his efforts to render the Jews respectable. In restoring the Catholic clergy, he gave them as little political power, as his situation and the prejudices of the public admitted; for although the collision between atheism and superstition had been terrible, it had not rubbed off the rust of bigotry from the pure metal of religion. His Concordat with the Pope has been censured by some, although he is said to have considered it "the vaccine of superstition." The precariousness of his new throne, amid so many old ones, rendered many measures expedient, which his sense of justice condemned, and hence in order to impress more firmly on the minds of his subjects his right to govern them, the clergy were permitted to announce him to the children of France, as "the envoy of God, to offend or disoblige whom, merited eternal damnation."

A system of taxation, simple, severe and rapacious, was organized with terrible energy throughout the empire. The greater part of the sums levied, however, emptied themselves into the treasury; for so exact and regular was the discipline of collec-

tion, that delay and defalcation were almost impossible. Each collector was obliged to deposit a sum of money as security for the promptness and integrity of his returns; and if any private person was incapable of discharging his portion of a tax, his neighbours of the parish were responsible for the deficiency. Great injustice and inequality necessarily resulted from the arbitrary mode of partitioning the contributions. When the demands of the state were ascertained by the Emperor, the minister of finance divided the aggregate sum among the departments, and sent his mandate to each Prefect for his quotathe Prefect, with his council, subdivided this quota among the arrondissements, and sent his order to the sub-prefect, who parcelled out the contingent among the communes, and demanded the respective portion of each mayor, who, in his turn, determined what each individual was to pay. If any person thought himself too heavily assessed, he might petition for redress, and might obtain it, if he could show that some other estate was unjustly favoured. But whatever may have been the inconveniences that grew out of this absolute system—whatever the absurdity of renewing the tax on industry, which was done by the creation of the "droit des patentes"-or the impolicy of augmenting the expense of travelling by the tax on post horses and public carriages—or the encouragement of immorality by the licences of lotteries and gambling houses, (all which errors still deform the financial code of France;) in fine, whatever may have been the exorbitance of the Imperial Treasury, there is much reason to believe that its rapacity has been greatly exaggerated in foreign countries. For the great resources of wealth which the financial exenteration of France, after the late invasion, brought to light, and the recuperative energy which she now displays under the pressure of enormous taxation, prove her to have grown much richer under the imperial regime. Nor did she shew much impatience under the taxes imposed on her by Napoleon. Perhaps the rapidity with which the treasure of the state circulated through the body politic, and the vivacity which this gave to the movements of a nation naturally volatile, may have refreshed the assiduity of its labours and allayed the discontent, which might have shown itself under a more sluggish government. The grandeur of the national exploits, too, seemed a jus-

X

tification of heavy assessments; and the magnificent prospect of conquering Europe, made the people pay them with alacrity.

The pressing exigencies of the state, and the poverty of its treasury, together with the imaginary incompatibility of a mercenary bounty to soldiers with patriotism, which sprang out of the rage for equality in the earlier stages of the revolution, had given rise first to the levie en massa and requisition, and afterwards, in 1798, to the Conscription. The first conception of this desolating system is said to have been imbibed by Carnot from the military practice of the Romans, and was certainly justifiable, as a last resort for security in that dreadful hour of peril, when the monarchs of Europe combined to devastate the unhappy commonwealth of France. But when the glittering armies of aristocratic impotence and folly, led on as they were by old fashioned regal imbecility, had been broken and dispersed by the fiery cohorts of France, which derived their energy from public spirit and a regular prelation of talents; and when the national militia were become converted into an instrument of offensive war, it became a grievance of such an atrocious nature, that I do not believe any civilized nation, whose reason was not dazzled and extinguished by the "grand thought," as it was called, of general conquest, would have submitted to it. There certainly never was a system (in its perversion) that lacerated so cruelly the domestic feelings of society; that tended so directly to demoralize the best virtues of our nature, or that tore asunder so violently all the bond's that sweeten human existence, # mitigate its sorrows. Every individual was forced, in the prime of his youth, to become a soldier; the student, who was accom. plishing himself for some liberal profession, was torn from the lamp of his closet to mingle in a scene of blood and rapine-the mechanic, who was learning the use of tools to be serviceable to mankind, was forced to buckle on the sword of war-the persant was torn from his fields, and forced to hand over his plough to his wife or his sister-the sons of the merchant were dragged out of his counting-house and associated with vagabonds-every occupation of life was suspended or sacrificed, and for what-Why, to fight battles on the sunny banks of the Ebro and the Tagus, or to stain with blood the icy streams of the Beresiss and the Volga!

War became at last the trade of the French; and in order to concentrate its agents with more frightful certainty and celerity, the empire was divided into thirty divisions, each comprising about four departments, and each placed under the control of a military government. The drafted men, or active conscripts, were marched off immediately for the army,-a corps of supplemental conscripts was formed, and exercised at home, in order to fill up vacancies from death or desertion, and another body of reserve was held in readiness for cases of emergency. The hiring of substitutes was much discouraged by the government; the employer was held responsible for the conduct of the person he had hired, and besides these difficulties, the never ceasing demand soon exhausted the supply of substitutes, or enhanced their value beyond the reach of ordinary fortunes. To prevent the murmurs of dissatisfaction from becoming audible, and the spirit of dissention dangerous, the conscripts were marched of to the army under an escort of gensed'armes, in single companies, and scattered immediately through old regiments inured to habits of plunder and profligacy. To prevent any conscript from escaping, no Frenchman under thirty was allowed to quit his neighbourhood without a well authenticated certificate of exemption from military duty, in addition to the passport which every man or woman in France was (and still continues) obliged to have, in order to leave an arrondissement. If persons disguised their age, or mutilated themselves to escape service, the punishment was severe in the extreme. But the most abominable feature of the whole code of conscription, was that which held parents responsible for the disappearance or misconduct of their children.* The laws of Draco themselves were exempt from that deformity. But the conscription was considered as the pivot on which the lever of universal conquest was to turn. The suggestion of Vegetius, that the first idea of the Roman legion must have been inspired by a god, was exultingly applied to it; and the same effects were sanguinely expected to result from it.

The English impressment, with all the aggravating circumstances attending it, was not to be compared to the French conscription; for, besides, that the objects of this coercion were comparatively few in number, and dragged only into a service

* See Letter on the Genius and Dispesitions of the French Government, 1810.

to which they were bred, there was some chance of escape from it, and the offender only was punishable.

The glory of France—the hope of plunder, and of unlimited promotion—the dread of punishment, and of family disgrace or ruin, together with a blind belief in destiny, produced in the minds of the soldiers a singular resignation to fate, and contempt of danger. Hence the sportive levity with which they committed crimes in foreign countries, and which curious comminglement of atrocity and festive pleasure, seemed to justify the sarcasm of Voltaire, that his countrymen were a compound of the tiger and the monkey.

Under the pretence of preventing conspiracies, and consolidating the public peace, the secrets of the post-office were habitually violated, and a door thus opened to the clandestine ruin of any man's reputation, by the most despicable frauds and forgeries. By way of lulling the public too, into a false confidence, the impressions of seals were taken off or copied, so that when the secrets of the letter had been pilfered, it might be carefully closed up again, and like a masked spy, sent on its pernicious errand. Every cipher of every foreign minister was known; and those who did not send special couriers with their despatches, had them searched before they left France. By this odious breach of right, the foundations of epistolary confidence throughout the empire were broken up, and all sympathy of political opinion dissolved, except when it was exactly in conformity with the sense of the government.

A simple but dreadful uniformity of rule prevailed over fifty millions of people. Ideas went forth from Paris in concentric circles. The simultaneous spreading of every thought it pleased the government to inspire, was as simple as the Lancastrian mode of communicating instruction. An idea was generally given out in the Moniteur at Paris, to be echoed by every journal and public functionary in the empire, under pain of suspension or suppression, and all classes of society were obliged to bleat out a repetition of it, whether they believed it or not. No article of foreign news could be published, until it had been filtered through the official gazette, nor any political idea printed, unless, in the dextrous jargon of the times, it was in the "sense of the government." No editor dared to acknowledge the con-

straint under which he laboured, nor even the vexatious citations he often received, to explain before a commissary of police, the incautious ambiguity of a doubtful phrase. Even books themselves were subjected to the harshest scrutiny of the censors,deformed by erasures, or perverted by surreptitious insertions, and the authors rewarded for the courteousness of their servility, or punished for the refractoriness of their honesty. Thus, was a moral phenomenon created in France, the most wonderful in itself, and the most appalling to the feelings of philanthropy, that was ever seen in a civilized land-that of a whole nation, proclaiming, as it were, "par acclamation," what not a single individual believed to be true In the end, says Lanjuinais, "un geant de mensonge s'eleva sur la France." The end proposed, was to bring every thought into the "sense of the government," whose interest and object it was to hold truth in captivity, to turn justice into contempt, to deride freedom as a vision-to calumniate virtue as the bauble of fools, and to eulogize the triumphs of ambition as the highest of glories.

The extent of territory that Napoleon governed, and the ascendancy which the triumphs of his arms had given him over the neighbouring nations, rendered the escape of any Frenchman from his commands almost impossible. When a man became obnoxious to government and eloped, a minute description of his person, went down through the prefects, the sub-prefects, the mayors and gensd'armes, to the fire side of every peasant in the empire. There remained not an inch of ground unscoured until the refractory conscript or fugitive was caught in his hiding place. The entire nation was entangled in a net of espionage, the most complicated and intricate in its nature, that was ever devised to hamper the moral liberties of mankind. Like the air it enveloped all creation, and like it was invisible in itself, but felt most sensibly in its effects. Every man locked up his opinions in the sanctuary of his own heart, for such was his dread of the venality of those around him, that he knew not whom to trust. The trade of treachery became so extensive, that the murmurs of dissatisfaction, which, in the unbending hours of delicious confidence, a man might let fall to the wife of his bosom were scarcely safe. As in the good old times of English despotism, dreams themselves were dangerous, for the idle tongue might tell them. Under the direction of

Fouché, the depth of whose malignant cunning, conjecture itself cannot fathom, houses are said to have been established by the police, as snares for the imprudence of youth. In these, young men after steeping their reason in wine, were introduced to the society of women of a decent exterior, employed expressly to inflame their passions to the indiscretion of madness, and in an unguarded moment, when the centinels of suspicion had left their posts, to filch out of them the secret sentiments of their souls.

I can perhaps give you a more correct idea, of the all-searching and ubiquitary nature of espionage, in the last days of the empire of France, by the relation of a particular fact, than by general statements. In 1813, Louis XVIII. wrote from England a confidential letter, to one of Napoleon's ministers, Regnaud St. Jean D'Angely. It was introduced into France in the bone of a lady's corset;* but the lady's dread of the vigilance of the police prevented her communicating directly with Regnaud, and therefore she engaged a mutual friend to tell him, that she had something of deep interest to communicate. The minister recoiled with indignant exasperation at the suggestion-but when the friend was gone, sent his confidential secretary to see the lady, at the hotel du Tibre. The secretary searched the apartments, locked the doors, then copied the letter and burnt the original. He took the copy to Regnaud, who observed that walls might hear, and he would not therefore speak on the subject, in his own house, but went out into the fields near Paris for the purpose. As the object of this letter was to seduce him from his allegiance to Napoleon, and as an acquiescence in its designs might have prevented his late exile, it is but fair to his memory, to tell you his honourable reply. "Tell Louis XVIII. said he, that I have long disapproved of the emperor's conduct, and foresee that he will ruin himself; but that as he has in confidence invested me with power I must discharge it with fidelity."

In fact the imperial government came at last to combine the domestic vexation of the feudal tyrannies, with the general oppression which followed the melting down of those principalities into large monarchies. The exemption from distant campaigns, which the insignificance of the baronial states afforded; and the relief of the subject from the toils of war, which grew out of the ulterior introduction of standing armies, were alike unknown to

* Mrs. Bishop.

it. Napoleon, too, had a feverish propensity to intermeddle in the private concerns of every family, arising from the wish to create an impression that he was more necessary to France than France was to him. Hence, not a marriage of any note could be solemnized without his signature, so that not only the public prosperity, but the domestic peace of every individual, was in his hands. The retention, however, of this antiquated custom by the royal government, is more absurd than its revival by the imperial, since the former lays claim to a prescriptive and divine right of ruling France.

The unparalleled pitch of prosperity to which Napoleon ultimately rose, inspired him with the desire of duping mankind into a belief that his abilities were supernatural—that at the very time he was darting from one extremity of his dominions to another—while he was directing the movements of a million of men in the field, and controlling the policy of all the cabinets in Europe, he could attend to the administration of the minutest things,—to the cutting of every canal, the opening of every road, and the arching of every bridge in the interiour of France. From this motive innumerable grand and petty decrees were signed for the sake of effect, not only at Milan and Berlin, at Madrid and Vienna, but on the battle fields of Austerlitz or Jena, of Wagram or Moskwa.

I believe I have now very nearly run over for your observation the bad political features of Napoleon's government, during the fourteen years that he swayed the sceptre of France. The expansion of tyranny during the greater part of this period was gradual but incessantly progressive. In the greener days of the consulate it shone but imperfectly like the glimmerings of a new moon, yet although checked and partially eclipsed at intervals by the lovely and beneficent hand of Josephine, it went on invariably augmenting in its phases until the union with the Austrian princess, from which time it boldly displayed its "broad circumference" and poured down its vertical rays with an intensity that threatened to scorch up all the bloom and prosperity of France.

A consideration of the numerous advantages which either directly or casually resulted to the empire and to Europe, from the measures of Napoleon, I must reserve for some future letter. My present purpose has been to show how, after the mad intemperance of the revolution had settled down into repose, the patience of the French was worn out by tyranny, and how natural it was for a nation in which public opinion had lost its influence, but in which public spirit had not died away along with it, to feel great dissatisfaction with its ruler and to display it on the first occasion without thinking of the consequences which might follow. The choice between domestic despotism and the chance of foreign servitude is so cruel an option—and for a people who had made such enormous sacrifices too for liberty as the French had done, to find themselves in this dreadful predicament, was exactly calculated I think to produce that numbness of patriotism which appeared in this country on the invasion of the allies,

LETTER XII.

Paris, March 25th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

The character of the imperial government, which I sketched in my last letter, was such, I apprehend, as might justify the conclusion, that the French had no very strong reason to believe its continuance necessary to secure to them the possession of their property, or the enjoyments of social life. So long as Napoleon gratified their exorbitant vanity by conquest, they were flattered into submission, and fancied they received a compensation for their sufferings. But when the vast coacervation of kingdoms, which he had gathered under his dominion, began to render his sceptre too cumbersome to be wielded with its former celerity; and when the protracted continuance of the Spanish war, by presenting the unusual spectacle of victory without conquest, exhausted the patience of the French, and set them to thinking on their actual condition, is it to be wondered at, that they exhibited some symptoms of fatigue? This they did do; and it was to relieve the public mind from the lassitude which the dullness of his career, after his marriage with Maria Louisa had occasioned, as well as to crush, by one gigantic effort, those remains of ancient Europe which offended the newness of his own royalty, that made the emperor resolve on the tremendous invasion of Russia in the summer of 1812. No individual ever reached such an height of greatness as that which he occupied at that time; and among those who had observed the orb of his effulgent fortunes in its ascent to its meridian, none could have imagined its sudden fall from its immeasurable altitude. It is not, however, to the causes, but to the consequences of that rapid descent, that I wish to call your attention. The destruction of half a million of men, carried such grief and dismay into every family in France and its dependencies, that nothing but the

dread of the Emperor's power, combined with the redoubled vigilance and activity of his police, prevented the French nation from rising in rebellion during the ensuing winter, and destroying the imperial government, or limiting its tyranny. The conspiracy of Mallet (the success of which would have been a blessing to Europe) failed in consequence of those causes. Unfortunately the disasters of the Russian campaign did not entirely destroy in France the imagined invincibleness of Napoleon. His overthrow was attributed to the inclemency of the season, rather than to the energy of the Russians. It was the doubtful results of the early conflicts of the campaign of 1813, that first encouraged the defection of his allies, and the defeat at Leipsic, after the desertion of the Saxons, only, that dissolved the phantom of terror by which he was governing Europe. The storm then came on too fast to admit of a conspiracy against his government at home, and a sympathy was excited in his favour by that eloquent appeal to the generous feelings of his subjects, in which he exclaimed, that he had raised up kings, and they had betrayed him-that he had created kingdoms and they had forsaken him; but that whilst supported by the French, he could never despair of victory.

Napoleon has been much censured for his obstinate adherence to what he considered the integrity of his empire; and it must be admitted, that a magnanimous attachment to France would have led him to submit to her retiring within her natural boundaries. the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. But he had sworn to preserve the empire, and it is questionable whether he would have held his sceptre after a curtailment of his territories. After the Allies had conquered their own timidity, and ventured to cross the Rhine, it is sufficiently evident, that he considered it impossible for him to reign with honour to himself, or credit to the nation, without some brilliant achievement which might environ his throne with glory. There is no doubt, that if he had accepted the terms which were offered him at Chattillon, the murmurs of dissatisfaction with his tyranny would, in the repose of peace, have beaten very harshly indeed upon his ears. Those who think otherwise mistook the seeming for the real dispositions of the French at that time. The Emperor had tired them out. The element on which the ark of his power floated, was the national vanity, and when that was no longer swollen by

success, the ark grounded. The efforts which the nation afterwards made to set it afloat, were inspired by patriotism rather than loyalty. It was the dread of national ruin-it was the shame of submission to foreigners, and not attachment to Napoleon, that opposed some resistance to the Allies between the Rhine and Paris. If he could have defeated those armies and chased them out of France, and been killed by the last ball they fired on the frontiers, the nation might have rejoiced, and Europe been the happier for it. The people of this country were then so heartily exhausted by civil commotion and foreign war, that a spontaneous acquiescence in the authority of young Napoleon would have followed the death of his father; and they were so tired of despotism, and the scheme of universal conquest, that their enthusiasm would have reverted into plans of internal improvement, and the star of civil liberty might have been substituted by them in lieu of that meteor of glory by which they had been so unhappily misled. Fate, however, decreed it otherwise. Napoleon, although playing the deepest game his masterly abilities ever planned, in acting offensively with his little army against a host of invaders on every side, forgot the absolute ascendancy of Paris over France. Whether he considered the march on the capital too desperate a resolution to be embraced by Blucher, as in reality it would have been, but for his interception of a despatch to the empress, communicating the impossibility of defending it; or whether he fancied the claims of the Bourbons - entirely forgotten, and relied on his matrimonial connection with Austria, as a security for his sceptre; or whether he still counted on the vigorous support of the nation, I know not;-but surely it was a great mistake as it turned out, to order the Empress to retire to Orleans, if Paris should prove untenable. He stood in need of a powerful mediator, whose blood and rank might have conciliated the regards, and appeased the resentments of his enemies; and if Maria Louisa had been a princess of tolerable spirit, she might by remaining in Paris have preserved him his crown. The resolution of dethroning him was not taken until a week after the surrender of Paris, and the flight of the empress to the Loire. The former event having speedily followed the latter, has led many to consider it as its necessary consequence. The terrible sufferings of the allies in the plains of St. Denis, and the ruin which would have

resulted to them from the failure of Blucher's last charge on Montmartre, heightened their apprehensions of the resistance of the French; so that it was only after the flight of the executive branch of the administration, and the disposition shown by the Senate to get rid of Napoleon, that the emperor of Russia, assembled on the night of the 5th of April, the members of the provisional government, to inquire into the dispositions of the French nation. Napoleon was then at the head of 50,000 men and 200 pieces of artillery at Fontainebleau; and if his former tyranny had not completely paralized the independent spirit of the French, he might have still triumphed over his enemies. But it was now too late-the loyalty and zeal of the nation were gone, and therefore in that hour of tremendous affliction, they exhibited the singular spectacle of neutrality! They were tired of Bonaparte-they cared nothing for the Bourbons, and were reconciled to taking these back, only because it nominally saved France from the odium of being conquered. The senate decreed the décheance of Napoleon; he sent a deputation of Mareshals to require as the condition of his abdication the establishment of the regency of Maria Louisa; she was absent; there was no one to support her in the council-Talleyrand broached the new doctrine of legitimacy; Dessolles recommended the recal of the Bourbons, and the emperor Alexander embraced that resolution.

It was said by Mr. Fox, in reflecting on the shameful servility, which follower the recal of the Stuarts, that a restoration is the most pernicious of all revolutions. So unquestionably it is, whenever it is an act of spontaneous repentance for the imagined sin of rebellion, against the indefeisible right of a particular family. Such a revolution, not only gives a solemn sanction to past errours and abuses, but it justifies the exercise of all manner of tyranny, in order to prevent the recurrence of the like evils in future. But there is a vast difference, between the voluntary uncoerced invitation to a king, to return to the throne of his ancestors, and that equivocal assent to his return, which may be produced by the combined influence of displeasure at present misgovernment, and the pressure of foreign bayonets. When king Charles went back into England, the contentment was so general, that it seemed, says lord Clarendon, as if the whole kingdom had gathered to meet him, to give loud thanks to God for his presence, and

to make "vows of affection and fidelity to the world's end."* But the restoration of Louis was in a more enlightened age, and under circumstances of a very different character. All men seemed to rejoice to be sure, and none to reflect on the probable consequences of the change; yet all enthusiasm for the divine right of kings was gone, and therefore Louis may be said to have alighted, with a fiery torch in his hand, upon the soil of France, when it was covered with inflammable particles.

The invitation which the emperor Alexander gave to the provisional government, to establish a constitution for France, suitable to the advanced condition of her civilization, appeased the alarms of the nation, and flattered it with the hopes of better times. By a miraculous concurrence of accidents, *legit:mate* kinga were become seemingly the friends of liberty; and as a good countenance is said to be a letter of recommendation, the new fangled doctrine of *Legitimacy*, was ushered into the world under the most flattering and delusive auspices;

> "So spake the false dissembler unperceived;" "And from his horrid hair shook pestilence and war."

The Senate availed themselves of the opportunity, and drafted a liberal plan of government; a sort of social contract between the nation and its future kings, which if adopted and observed might have saved a world of trouble to both parties. But five and twenty years of adversity and exile, had not destroyed in the minds of the Bourbons, the vision of their divine right to govern France. They mistook the public acclamations, on the return of peace, for rejoicings at their restoration-began to wonder at themselves, for having remained so long in England whilst France was longing for them-and yet, after rejecting the constitution, fell into the errour of publicly thanking, "next after God, the Prince Regent of England," for the recovery of their throne. This declaration wounded the vanity of the French, who were desirous of persuading the world, that it could not have been accomplished without their acquiescence at least; and I have no doubt, it shut up more hearts against reconciliation with the Bourbons, than even the rejection of the constitution itself. The emigres, who, as the French said, had come into France in the rear of the baggage waggons of the allies, and some of whom, it must be confessed

* History of the Rebellion, book xvi. 772.

made a very ludicrous appearance, advised the king to adopt no written constitution at all, but to tread in the good old footsteps of St. Louis, and the *Grand Monarque*.

He was however too wise to follow their giddy counsel entirely, and therefore published before entering Paris, at St. Ouen, a declaration of the principles which were to form the basis of a constitution, to be submitted to the Senate and Corps legislatif. If the public mind was a little shocked by the delay of the declaration, and the dating it in the 19th year of his reign; the dissatisfaction was considerably augmented at the publication of the charter, which was less liberal than the declaration itself; and which instead of being presented to the chambers for ratification, was abruptly bestowed ("fait concession et octroi,") on the nation. Yet notwithstanding these little chills of disappointment, which blighted some of the blossoms of hope, the bloom of expectation was at that time large and luxuriant; for the French imagined that as they had passed through the horrors of a dreary winter, they had a right to anticipate a brilliant spring and a glorious summer. The liberals were pleased with the prospect of a freer government;---the jacobins were satisfied to have their titles and plunder secured to them; and the ultra-royalists, together with the mass of foreign nations, considered the restoration as an entire re-establishment of every thing on the footing it had occupied in 1789, without ever reflecting that the public mind had been most powerfully agitated, and called forth to a degree of dovelopement hitherto unknown. It was in fact a sort of jubilee season in politics, in which imagination covered over with flowers the thorny and the rocky path of the future, without ever reflecting on the suggestion of Milton, that the seeds of good and evil came out of the apple of Paradise together, so that their plants are always united. Perhaps no hereditary monarch, in the delicate and difficult conjuncture of circumstances in which Louis was placed, could have been expected to act with greater moderation and good sense than he did; but the errours into which he fell were nevertheless the cause of his subsequent expulsion from the throne. As it is my wish to point out these to you, not through the prism of passion, but as well as possible through the impartial telescope of posterity, I shall have to dwell particularly on all the important actions, and principles of his government.

The charter which the king in the free exercise of his royal will, as he expressed it, gave to France, declares that Frenchmen are all equal in the eye of the law; shall all pay taxes in proportion to their fortunes, and be all equally admissible to civil and military employments. It allows freedom of conscience and worship to all religions, although the Roman Catholic shall be that of the states it guarantees personal liberty to the subject, under such qualifications as the law may prescribe, and the liberty of the press, with such restrictions as the law may impose. It abolishes the conscription-declares property inviolable, and commands an entire oblivion of all votes and opinions, given prior to the restoration. It vests the whole executive power in the king; gives him not only the right of making peace or war, but that of appointing every public agent of administration in the kingdom, together with, not only the absolute veto, but the sole right of proposing laure, and of issuing such decrees and ordinances as may be necessary for the execution of the laws and the safety of the state. The legislative power is vested in the king, with the chamber of Peers and the chamber of Deputies. The deliberations in the chamber of Peers are secret; the members take their seats at 25 years of age, but cannot vote till they are 30, with the exception of the princes of the blood, who vote at 25, but who cannot take their seats in the house unless called up each session, by an order from the king. It, only, has cognizance of the crime of high treason, of offences against the public safety, and of the criminal offences of its own members. A member of the chamber of Deputies, must be at least 40 years of age; and pay a direct tax of 1000 francs per annum, unless there should not be 50 persons in his department paying that amount; and one half the members from each department must reside in it. This body is elected for five years; (onefifth of it being annually renewed,) by electors who must be 30 years of age, and pay at least 300f. direct contribution.* The president of the Deputies is selected by the king, from a list of five 'candidates, presented by the chamber; and their deliberations are public, except when five members request the contrary. The chamber is convoked annually by the king, who can prorogue or dissolve

* The 258 members of Arrondissement only are now elected by those electors. The 172 members of department are elected by one-fourth of the highest contributors of the said electors, who are thus doubly represented. See law of June 1820. it at pleasure, but in the latter case must assemble another in three months. The ministers are declared responsible for their conduct, and may be impeached for treason or extortion by the Deputies, and tried by the Peers; they may be members of either chamber, and have a right to a seat at all events, and to deliver their opinion, whenever they choose on any question. The judges are declared irremovable during good behaviour—the trial by jury is preserved, and no extraordinary commission or tribunal can be created, unless the government judges *prevotal* courts necessary. Confiscation of goods is abolished, and all existing laws not contrary to the charter continued in force.

Such are the principal features of the charter which Louis XVIII. solemnly bound himself and his posterity to observe, and which notwithstanding its manifold imperfections and ambiguities, was a more liberal constitution, than the French had enjoyed, except during one or two short intervals since 1792. The manner in which it has been interpreted and carried into execution may furnish matter for future reflections. I cannot forbear suggesting however that it has been regarded in a very opposite light by different parties, and that this contrariety of opinion is likely to discompose for a long time, the public serenity of this country. Those who consider the charter as a concession from the legitimate proprietor of France, to a nation of refractory and undutiful subjects, find ample cause to exalt the moderation and magnanimity of Louis, far above those of any prince in a resembling situation. Those on the contrary who regard it in the light of a national compact-as the fulfilment of the conditions upon which the nation consented to receive back upon the throne, a race of princes, who had been subsisting for five and twenty years, on the eleemosynary bounty of foreign powers, consider it the mere skeleton of a constitution, and as one of the most imperfect acts of justice, that ever requited a splendid election to power. The first of these parties would abolish the charter, and the last would enlarge it. Thus from the same fountain, two political streams have been let off in opposite directions, with great violence and fury. Their channel however, is in the periphery of a circle, so that they must ultimately meet in collision. Happy indeed will it be if before that time, one of them shall have so spent itself by leaks and evaporations, as to prevent the violence of a concussion from

breaking down the embankments of reason, and flooding the fields of France once more with the waters of bitterness and tribulation.

But although the *manner* of granting the charter and the stipu-lations of it, were sources of ultimate discord, the joy was considerable in the honeymoon of the restoration Bright visions of the future danced before the imaginations of the French and elated them too much. Hence the sudden recoiling of the public affection, from the Bourbons, has been ascribed by careless observers to the levity of the French character, and not to its real cause, the erroneous policy of the court. The English are certainly not a fickle people, and yet you may remember that some jarrings of discontent disturbed the harmony of allegiance even in king Charles the II's reign, although he was brought back by the wishes of his people, and beheld on his first arrival the flame of loyalty kindled on the altar of repentance and fanned by the wings of affection. Few kings who are born to their station know themselves or their duties. Lord Clarendon, I think, mentions in his memoirs, that when king Charles arrived at Canterbury he was highly shocked by a liberty which Gen. Monk took of presenting him with a list of persons whose favours with the people entitled them to be made privy counsellors. The impertinence was deemed the more audacious too, because out of seventy individuals whose names were handed in, only two, (Southampton and Hertford,) had constantly adhered to the king in his adversity. In truth, Charles II. returned into England with the idea that he was to govern for his own pleasure, and not for the good of the realm; so that instead of erasing from his memory all recollections of the injuries he had received, he made them principles of action; and hence originated that train of mischievous policy which was pursued by his successor, until it awakened the nation, and caused it to drive the Stuarts from the noblest inheritance on earth.

Louis XVIII. too, although a man of much sounder judgment, and better character than Charles, came back with the same antiquated notion of divine right; and he did not therefore regard the decree of the senate, which declared that Napoleon had forfeited the crown, by the violation of his compact with the nation; nor the subsequent one, which made a *conditional* offer of it to the Bourbons. He declared, by the mouth of his chancellor, two months after his return, that he held his crown "from God and his fathers only." The vanity of the monarch here wounded the pride of the people, and, said an eloquent Frenchman, "alors nos cœurs se sont reserrés." It was that declaration of the king which caused the French to think that the Bourbons had neither learned, nor unlearned, any thing from adversity.

Appearances, it is true, were at that time deceptive, even to wise and sagacious men. The apparent satisfaction of the French at the downfall of the conqueror; the unbounded elation of the royalists at the suddenness of their unexpected triumphi and the harmonious aspiration of all the nations after peace, seemed to justify the belief, that a political millenium was at hand, and that those who fancied themselves delegated by divine Providence to govern France, might safely do so after their own fashion. It was the confidence inspired by these circumstances, that led the king into some impolitic measures, and among others. the substitution of the white, for the tri-coloured or national flag and cockade. Symbols are of no use beyond the ideas they inspire; and as the tri-coloured flag was associated in the minds of the French, with what was most glorious in their history, it was an act of exceeding vanity to wound their pride by rejecting it. If the most gallant monarch France ever saw, sacrificed his religion to the opinion of his subjects, his descendant might have been surely justifiable in sacrificing the lily to the eagle. Yet it would have required almost superhuman abilities, to have acted with perfect propriety, in the situation in which Louis was placed; and it must be admitted, that few legitimate princes would have acted more discreetly.

There were then many good people in France, who shuddered at the name of liberty, because they regarded the revolution as a practical illustration of its effects, and who therefore exerted themselves to sway away the king's mind from the adoption of free principles. The flock of Emigres were of course hostile to freedom, because they regarded it as the cause of their misfortunes. The imperial courtiers and the successful jacobins were covetous of retaining their disgraceful honours, and therefore combined with the *emigrés* in recommending the adoption of absolute government. The phrase legitimate king in contradistinction to one by the will of the people, was luckily invented by Talleyrand who knowing the potent spell of a happy phrase in France, from having seen the nation successively mad after "liberty and equality," after a "republic, one and indivisible;" and finally after "honour and glory," now fancied it would become equally enamoured of "legitimacy and Louis le desiré."

After the charter was established, there was nothing but a most religious observance of it, and an unreleating effort to put the other institutions of the kingdom in harmony with it, that could have atoned for the ungracious manner in which it was given, or have calmed that painful inquietude, nay, contagious vivacity of apprehension for the future, which began to pervade all ranks of society. If the government, instead of causing the legislature to spend its time in the discussion of idle and unmeaning frivolities, had called its attention to the urgent necessities of the kingdom; to laws for the security of person, the liberty of the press, the independence of elections, the responsibility of ministers, the recruitment of the army, the trial by jury, the choice of municipal officers, &c.; if this, I say, had been the course heartily pursued by the government, the sparks of allegiance which existed every where, might have been fanned into a flame, the heat of which would have produced a fusion of all parties into one. But on the assembling of the Chambers in June, 1814, a party, headed by some ministers, and supported by the favorites of the palace, formed itself, and assumed the appellation of royalists, when no adversaries of royalty appeared. This faction entered a formal protest against the charter, as a violation of the imperishable rights of future kings, and did not disguise a wish to see it subverted. Secret societies were formed, says Count Lanjuinais, of nobles, priests, magistrates, and office-hunters, who derided the charter as a mere second edict of Nantz, to be abolished at pleasure; these elubs eulogized the old regime, spoke contemptuously of the present, and panted after what they called a real restoration.

The ministry usurped the legislative right of making laws, and issued them under the name of ordinances, for the revival of old laws, or the violation of those which did not suit their purposes. An unresponsible council of state, not recog-

nized by the charter, was created and afterwards converted into a tribunal, whose members were removeable at the royal pleasure. The charter had provided that the judges appointed by the king should hold their office during good behaviour, but in order to elude this guarantee of liberty, it was determined to leave the present incumbents in office indefinitely, so that a dread of removal might teach them servility; and as these judges, in spite of their dependence growing out of this miserable subterfuge, might not be sufficiently subservient for the despatch of state business, special tribunals, (the odious cours prevotales of the empire,) were re-established. The liberty of the press was next destroyed, a monopoly of journals given to the ministry, and by a retroactive law, the approving the naturalization of all adopted citizens was given to the king. One third of the population of France is estimated to be interested in the national property sold during the revolution, and yet the government had the imprudence to let their censors of the press suggest the propriety of confiscating those estates back again. Negociations were next opened at Rome, for a new Concordat, which was to annul the existing one, and to leave the purchasers of church property dependent for their estates on the will of the Pope. In the Chamber of Peers, it was proposed to tax the nation, or the proprietors of confiscated property, three hundred millons of francs, to indemnify the emigres for their losses. The minister of war proposed to erect a monument to the French who fell at Quiberon, in arms against France. and a general of the Vandeans, says Lanjuinais, went into Brittany, to hunt up such of his old companions, as might be worthy of honorary or pecuniary rewards, for the zeal they had shown in "the furious close of civil butchery." The republican, not the Jacobin, members of the Senate, and the Institute, were eliminated out of those bodies, and in spite of the oblivion commanded by the charter, a free exhumation of all revolutionary votes and opinions was allowed to the royalist journals. The Jesuits were encouraged to march over the country to preach intolerance and despotism, to the annoyance, and alarm of three millions of protestants. The proud and haughty carriage of the noblesse, both at court and in the provinces, and their affected disdain of the new nobility, served to offend and

alienate many from the new government. The giddiness of their vanity, was deaf to the remonstrances of reason, and an insulting superiority was every where assumed. When lady Jersey asked a lady of the old noblesse, the names of certain dutchesses at court, she replied, "Nous ne connoissons pas ces femmes-ce sont des mareshales." The legion of honour was continued, but its pride was soon wounded by a profuse multiplication of its numbers, and an ordinance soon after put in question the support hitherto given to the female orphans of such of its members, as had died for their country. The army was next offended by a retrenchment of the expenses of the Invalides; by the disbanding of a thousand of the mutilated inhabitants of this hospital, because their native countries no longer belonged to France; and the sending fifteen hundred others on pitiful pensions to their homes. The places in the ecole militaire were given to the "faithful noblesse," whose names were new to those who had achieved the hundred triumphs of France; whilst the pride of the new nobility was injudiciously shocked, by the ennobling of the family of Georges Cadoudal, who had come into France with the notorious design of assassinating the emperor. Public schools were likewise erected, into which none but the children of ancient families could be admitted; and the spirit of civilization, too, all over the world, was next offended by the re-establishment of the slave trade.

Such were the imprudencies and follies of the new government in the first year of the restoration; and yet the French are stigmatized as a fickle and capricious people, for showing no enthusiasm in support of it, when Napoleon returned from Elba.— That the king was beguiled into these aberrations from sound policy by many amiable and respectable feelings, I have no doubt; but when the pride of a great nation is wounded by the acts of its government, it seldom stops to inquire into the private motives which might extenuate the offence.

LETTER XIII.

Paris, March 28th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

In my last letter I endeavoured to shew you that the first emotion of the public mind in France on the restoration of the Bourbons was that of astonishment mingled with pleasure; and that the vague inquietude which ensued was fretted into fermentation only by the vexations and alarms which the new government most injudiciously scattered over the country. I wished you to observe how the imposition of the charter had prevented it at first from captivating the regards, or entwining itself around the affections of the nation; and how afterwards the negligent execution, (not to say wanton violation) of its articles, produced a general discontent which was hindered only from exploding by the want of a rallying point, and by the ignorance in which the discontented were of their own numbers. It is, in fact, exceedingly difficult in France to collect the sentiments of the general public on any subject. The channels for a free circulation of opinions do not exist, and the slavery of the press, by rendering contradiction impossible, causes all reports to be heard with distrust. Hence the nation when full of discontent is like an electric machine when charged-all looks quiet and free from menace the moment before the conducting body approaches for the shock; and hence the origin of that reputation for political fickleness which the French have acquired from the exilition with which their public resentment has several times exploded.

No nation was ever trained to greater celerity of thought and action than the French under the imperial regime, and of this the new government should never have lost sight. But instead of attempting to keep alive the vivacity of the public mind by the fascinations of liberty, they substituted the narcotick phantom of legitimacy in lieu of Bonaparte's goddess of glory, which

so dulled the nation that it was ready to plunge even into revolution, in order to escape from the yawnings of ennui. This new-fangled legitimacy is at best, in a civilized community, but a rotten basis of government, and yet the Bourbons chose to rest their throne upon it. The pretension, however, might have been harmless, if other stays and butments had been provided to support the arches of its foundation; but these were neglected, for the king was assailed by such a gang of anti-constitutionalists, that he had not time to think of them .- Well might he doubt indeed whether the charter would avail him any thing when he saw it railed at, not only by the emigrants, but by that gang of apostate imperialists who had betrayed the despot without renouncing despotism, and who were now glad to swell the exility of the court party and to proffer to a constitutional monarch their dexterity in the Machiavelian obliguities of tyranny. Assailed as Louis XVIII. was by these crafty and designing politicians, and prone, as he must have been from education and the circumstances of his life, to lean in favour of his plundered and exiled nobles, we ought, perhaps, more to admire his forbearance, than condemn his errors. But as I wish to shew you that the political mutability of the French has resulted rather from misgovernment than versatility of character, it is indispensably necessary to call your attention to the manner in which the rulers of France have fallen off from allegiance to their own engagements. Now, that Napoleon broke all his promises to the French, no one pretends to deny, and that the royal government was estranged from the path of rectitude by evil counsellors, we have the acknowledgement of the king himself. Neither remembered that the best mode of ensuring stability to a government is that pointed out by Carnot in his noble protest against the assumption of the imperial purple by Bonaparte; "C'est d'etre juste; c'est que la faveur ne l'emporte pas auprès de lui sur les services; qu'il ait une garantie contre les déprédations et l'imposture."

Unluckily for Louis XVIII. there did not prevail any harmony of opinion in his first ministry. His favourite companion in exile, the Comte de Blacas, was nominally at its head; but he had neither the skill nor ability necessary to hold the reins with directing energy, and he therefore left his associates to drive with the zig-zag irregularity of their own particular fancies. He had been so long an idle secretary, governing France in imagination at Hampton Court, that the toils of office were fatiguing to him; and without having ever done any thing to gain the confidence of the nation, he now laboured under the imputation of venality in distributing the crosses of the Legion, and this suspicion alone unfitted him to be the prime minister of France. Nor did the public apprehension stop there. He was generally believed to be leagued with two other ministers, the Chancellor Dambray and Ferrand, in a scheme for the entire restoration of the old regime. The king's brother, Monsieur, and his two sons, the Dukes of Angouleme and Berri, were also imagined to belong to that anti-constitutional faction, and as they were the heirs to the crown their supposed sentiments cut off one of the most powerful supports of the government-that vain and delusive calculation on the virtues of the heir-apparent, which usually, in hereditary monarchies, opens the fountains of hope on every future scene, and drowns the agony of present distress in the balm of expectation.

Another of the ministry, the Abbe Montesquieu, was a man of intelligence; remarkable, in every stage of his career, for the amenity of his manners, the moderation of his opinions, the fide lity of his principles, and the seductive powers of his gentle eloquence. But he had not that presumptuous audacity of character which dazzles and over-rules the minds of factious men, and which assumes, in the cabinet, an ascendancy that can never be acquired in unsettled times, by mere rectitude of principle and benevolence of design. He had announced that Louis was come back, not to punish, but to forget the revolution; and that it was his intention to select the agents of his government from among those who were qualified by education and habit for the discharge of business, rather than from among those favourites, who, after being debilitated by the idleness of the old regime, had been lounging for twenty years in the inactivity of domestic life. Some impolitic measures, it is true, were partly ascribed to him, and among others the law of the press; but no one denies him to have been infinitely amiable in social life, and to have shown (though the poorest of the king's ministers) an instance of abnegation very rare in France, in refusing to accept a present of one hundred thousand francs out of the treasury, which, under the gracious appellation of indemnity, was given to all the ministers on the dissolution of the royal government.

The other members of the cabinet, Louis, Berenger, and Beugnot, had served the revolutionary governments-the first was a silent financier, the second a man of zealous research, and the third had worked his way through all the entanglements of faction without reproach or indignity. Of Talleyrand, I will only observe, that his great abilities, and his agency in achieving the restoration, entitled him to the royal favour, but that he had, by the treacherous versatility of his conduct, and the aptitude of his nature for intrigue, lost all reputation in the nation, except for wit and selfish sagacity. Marshal Soult was probably brought into the ministry to flatter the military, and to give a martial frown to the countenance of France at the Congress of Vienna. He was endowed by nature with the most consummate abilities for war, but has never hesitated to bend with supple reverence to any government that flattered his ambition, nor to unhinge himself from any engagements that embarrassed or impeded the selfishness of his career. He was supposed to have panted under the imperial government for the crown of Portugal from love of tyranny; and suspected to have foraged in the blood of the English at Toulouse, after he knew that the war was done. But be those charges true or not, his conduct as minister to Louis was bad enough. He spoke contemptuously of the charter, as a useless piece of parchment; suggested the monument of Quiberon; and the persecution of Gen. Excelmans.

Such were the men selected by Louis XVIII. to conduct his government, and who, instead of tranquillizing the distractions of the nation, augmented its discontent by their own petty divisions; and went on reeling and staggering under the weight of government, until they brought it to the ground. Some new and impolitic step, which provoked or bruised the vanity and impatient patriotism of the French, was taken every day, until the variety of dissatisfaction produced a fever all over the country in the autumn and winter of 1814. Many well disposed and sensible men saw that the existing state of things could not last, unless the Bourbons identified their interests with the interests of the revolution; nor could any thing have concealed this notorious fact from the Princes themselves, except that delusive medium of vision which is created around a throne by servility and adulation. The signs of a new hurricane were visible every where, and yet the royal pilots never thought of reefing a sail.— It was perhaps the burst of indignation which followed on the heels of Bonaparte's abdication, as much as any thing else, that blinded them to the actual situation of France, and prevented their perceiving, that when the novelty of the restoration was over, the French might reflect that much had been lost, and little gained by that event, and might be thus led to fancy the royal family, what they had for many years been taught to believe them, the gates that had barred out a flood of glory from France.

In that perilous state of things, a free press might have warned them of the predicament in which they stood; but they had imprisoned it; and by this they gave wings to every sinister report and silly rumour that the idle or the designing chose to hatch, in order to unsettle the public mind. For, as many wished for change, and many apprehended it, the sole business of many persons was to propagate extravagant stories, which would never have been believed, if any reliance could have been placed on the newspaper contradiction of them.

Napoleon had actually appeared so much less popular in France after his 'abdication, than he had been previously imagined to be; and had been rendered so ludicrous by the accounts published of the disguises he had assumed to avoid being massacred on his way to Elba, that all apprehension of his re-appearance on the great theatre of the world fell asleep. An hysterical laugh of ridiculous joy had succeeded universally to the late deferential shiverings of fear. That Napoleon had neglected to stab himself, like a true tragedy hero, on the ruins of the burnt Orangerie, at Fontainebleau, was a fertile source of sneers for political popinjays, and even graver men began to regard it as an evidence of the pitiful selfishness of his ambition. As for the governors of Europe, they seemed to have forgotten him, or to recollect him only to regret the "liberal terms," they had Not one suspected that he was couching in granted him. order to spring with more certainty on his quarry-"Qu'il avait reculé pour mieux sauter.

In the treaty of Fontainebleau, it had been stipulated, that Napoleon should, in consideration for abdicating the crowns of France, Italy, &c. receive for himself in sovereignty, the Island of Elba, with an annuity of two millions of francs from France; and that the dutchies of Parma, Guastala, and Placentia, should be given to the Empress and her son. These grants could scarcely have been considered large in comparison with the sacrifices he made, and the capacities of resistance which still adhered to him; for with an army of 50,000 men at Fontainebleau, with one of 30,000 near the Loire, and the hardy legions of Soult in the south; with the peasants of Lorraine and Alsace in arms, and the possible support of the rest of France, the unprosperous issue of the campaign was by no means certain. But even allowing these conditions to have been liberal in the extreme, they should still have been held sacred; for, to violate them was perfidious if not impolitic. Yet it is notoriously known, that the congress at Vienna hesitated about Parma, and agitated the question of removing Napoleon from Elba-that the government of France, under the miserable pretext, that she was not a party to the convention, and that the payment had been only promised by her sponsors, eluded the payment of it-that the estates of Napoleon and his family were sequestered, and no means spared to reduce to beggary the man who had recently commanded the treasuries and the destiny of Europe. Common sense might have suggested, that when a valiant and forgiving people like the French, beheld the hero of their revolution, and the gallant companions of his exile in danger of starvation, from the want of good faith among his enemies, the dissatisfaction with him might melt into compassion, and this compassion kindle a sympathy in his favour. But no-common sense was a vulgar guide, and its dictates too rough a curb to rein in the fantastic caperings of ministerial pride. To them the sun of Napoleon's prosperity seemed set for ever; and when they deigned to think of him, it was with a half formed wish, that he might attempt the invasion of France, in order that they might destroy him, and finish the counter-revolution, which in their opinion the king had only begun.

Time rolled on, however. Napoleon seemed safely lodged in Elba. The august monarchs and their glittering suites made a summer jaunt into England, where, among other stupendous sights got up for their entartainment, they were regaled with a naval battle on the Serpentine River, and much edified, no doubt, to discover how easy it was to capture an American fleet—in Hyde Park. After this, they set to studying the new system of political anatomy, and galloped off to Vienna, to dissect Europe, and consolidate her old despotisms. But whilst this was going on, and the public mind of France fermenting with excess of chagrin, the imperial eagle took flight from Elba, alighted at Cannes, shook, by the rustling of her wings, the whole continent of Europe, and then flew from "steeple to steeple, even till she lighted on the towers of Notre Dame at Paris."

The impression which has generally prevailed in England, that Napoleon came back in consequence of a conspiracy in his favour, is totally destitute of foundation. All the researches of the royal government, after the second restoration, not only failed to establish the existence of the alleged invitation, but tended to confirm the assertion of Napoleon, that his return was an inspiration of his own, bottomed on the belief, that a sudden sally of brilliant heroism might, in the discontented state of mind in which the French then were, revive their enthusiasm in his favour, and recover for him his crown. The enterprize was exceedingly well timed, and although some have censured it as precipitate, was executed at the proper moment The people were ripe for rebellion in France; the congress of Vienna had not taken any solemn engagements in the settlement of Europe; considerable dissatisfaction prevailed at the changes it proposed; and all the nations were beginning to be irritated by the disappointment of their hopes. The wounds which Napoleon had inflicted were not done smarting, it is true, nor were the allied armies disbanded; yet if he had waited longer, an insurrection would have occurred in France without him, and the most splendid achievement of his life would have been without its lustre.

If any conspiracy had been formed in his favour, it must have been by the army, or by the public, or by the government agents. If by the army, a general declaration in his favour must have immediately occurred on his landing; if by the public, some proof of it must have been discovered by the police, and military tribunals of 1815---if by the treachery as was alleged of the minister of war, Soult, and other functionaries, would they not have placed troops favourable to him, near the place of his landing, in order to secure its success? Now, it is well known that the army did not in any part of France declare in his favour, on receiving the news of his debarkation-that General Carsin at Antibes repulsed his demonstration on that place, and captured his advanced guard; that most of the generals who fell at Ligny and Waterloo, offered their services to the king, even after Napoleon had reached Lyons; that general Marchand, who commanded at Grenoble, (and under whom were Labedoyere and Mouton Duvernet, who were afterwards executed,) showed so much fidelity to the Bourbons, that the king appointed him president of an electoral college after his second return; and that in fact not a soldier declared for Napoleon for six days after his landing, when at the village of Mure he rode chivalrously up to the line of the out-posts of Grenoble, and asking whether there was any soldier who wished to take the life of his Emperor, was answered by a shout of "vive l'empereur!" I am aware that tame and common place spirits have represented this act which electrified the imagination of France, as a charlatan trick, arranged for the purpose of theatrical effect; but every circumstance which time has brought to light, strengthens the belief that it was a resolution inspired by despair.

The circumstances, which attended the march of Napoleon, elearly proved that the feelings of the French nation on the ocçasion were almost neutral. Independent of the printed details of his journey, I have heard it asserted by one who accompanied him from Elba, that he did not gain a recruit for the first six days, and was disappointed in every attempt to rouse the enthusiasm of the people;—that the public temper was so equivocal that he often feared to enter a town which might be strong enough to check his march—and that up to the moment he met the troops from Grenoble, he and his followers were in a state of the most heart-rending anxiety, as to the result of the expedition. The French people in fact, had not had time to forget the evils of the late war, and considered the restoration of the emperor as the precursor of another sanguinary conflict. To the merchant enanged in extensive schemes of foreign traffic, a war was terrible in the extreme-to the agriculturist, dependant for prosperity on the facility of procuring labour, and a market for his produce, the prospect of intestine confusion was pregnant with ruin;-and whatever may have been the attraction of the manufacturers to Napoleon, from the advantages formerly derived from his prohibitive system, it must have been much weakened by the dangers of revolution or foreign invasion. Such were the circumstances which damped the ardour of practical men, whilst those of a speculative turn recoiled with equal apprehension from the remembrance of his former tyranny. But on the other hand, there was no disposition to oppose him, and therefore his landing shock the thinking part of the nation with astonishment, although it was heard by the royalists with as little dread as a distant peal of thunder in a serene day. Madame de Stael describes very vividly her own foreboding apprehensions, in perceiving a forgotten eagle still couching in a corner of the staircase of the Tuilleries, as she ascended to the first levee of the king, after the news of Bonaparte's debarkation; and she sketches with equal felicity, the silly joy of the gilded pageants of the court, and the arrogant disdain with which they derided the idea of the invader's success.

Because Bonaparte succeeded in winding his little band through the mountains of Provence and Dauphiny, for 100 miles without opposition, it has been asserted that he had a secret understanding with some of the chief officers of state. There are persons so fond of mystery, that they delight in none but occult and extraordinary causes; persons who, like the wolf in the fable are always determined to find, for devouring the lamb, some reason better than the real one.

That the French nation in general, had taken great umbrage at the proceedings of the court—at the continuation of the "droits reunis" which Monsieur had promised to abolish, and at seeing France stripped of all her conquests, even those parts of Belgium which they regarded as essential to her compactness,—and that they were casting their eyes about for a fit person to wear the crown, is I believe unquestionably true. But the Duc d' Orleans and not Napoleon, was the man on whom their regards were generally turned. It was conjectured that his being of the old blood royal would prevent his elevation to the throne from wounding the sensibility of the *legitimates*—that his of the revolution would identify his the principle of election, on which make him scrupulously regardful of he lacked abilities to conduct a great of principle disdained the aspirational indulged, must have trampled on gravided in opinion on the merit of his a purposes of his friends; for whilst som of illustrious loyalty to his sovereign, d

xpresses

of illustrious loyalty to his sovereign, d _____wuit reprobate it as a pusillanimous abandonment of the interest of his nation, and of a chance of doing good to mankind. Yet there are so few instances of princes who have refused to plunge a nation into distress to advance their own views, and there is something so amiable in a generous sympathy for a family, whose misfortunes had gone far to atone for its past errours; and there is something so noble in respecting the repose of the best king that has set upon the throne of France (except Henri,) since Louis XII.; that I shall always think the believed deportment of the duke of Orleans, in that delicate affair, entitles him to the distinguished admiration of all good men.

Had the wishes alone of the French been consulted, in the choice of a king, Eugene Beauharnois would have probably united more suffrages in his favour than any other individual. The respect and affection which the chivalrous humanity and uniform rectitude of his conduct had won for him, was heightened about this time by the death of his mother, who of all the individuals that have figured of late in France, is remembered with the most general esteem. But then there was some powerful apprehensions restraining the attempt to indulge this inclination; and in the mean time some circumstances occurred to reconcile the nation to Napoleon. A report that he had been foully betrayed, took off from him the odium of defeat-the immensity of his fall awakened some compassion for his disaster;---the sublime resignation expressed in his farewell address to his guard, made the sins of his ambition seem the errours of his judgment-and rumours of the activity with which he devoted his time to the improvement of his little island, led many to suppose his character had been changed.

mged in tate of fluctuation and doubt were the French when in the cipitated himself on their shores. The royalists and aposthe. e imperialists were, many of them, as I have already suggested, pleased at this, because they fancied they now had him secure. But the telegraphic despatch of his entrance into Grenoble abated the intemperance of their joy; and although they were again elated by the reports of his capture and death, their happiness was short lived, for the news of the fall of Lyons soon came to throw them into consternation, and then the defection of Ney's army completed their panic terrour. From that moment all was confusion in Paris; and it was somewhat remarkable that the only persons who seem to have rallied with zeal round the Bourbons after this terrible crisis, were the Liberals, a set of men, who, so far from having enjoyed favour, had been treated with greater contumely, under the royal than under the imperial regime. The first emotion of the liberal party, says Constant, one of its most eloquent members, on hearing of Bonaparte's landing was to deplore his return, and their first desire to prevent his success. Notwithstanding the fresh remembrances of the faults of the new government, not one of them hesitated, because all recollected that under Bonaparte, "l'egoisme etoit consideré comme le mobile de toutes les actions; l'exaltation en tout genre etoit tournée en derision sous le nom d'enthousiasme; l'insouciance erigée en sagesse; et le plaisir du moment declare l'unique but de la vie."

The hearts of the friends of liberty sickened at the thought of a regime, under which the eclat of military glory and the enjoyments of power-a disdain of freedom and a conviction, that the human species was devoted to self-interest, obeyed nothing but force, and merited nothing but contempt, were leading principles of action. The old marquis de la Fayette, who had shown a disposition to aid the royal government on the restoration, as friendly to liberty, but who had been repulsed from court by the clouded countenances of the princes at his appearance there, now hastened up to Paris, as if reanimated by the ardour of youth, and exerted all his influence with the Chamber of Deputies to organize a vigorous system of defence. Day after day, even till the king's flight from Paris cut the last thread of hope for the Constitutionalists, did the press teem with eloquent exhortations to arms, from the pen of Benjamin Constant. But the

vacillations of the government had divided, as Bacon expresses it, the action of "men's bodies from their souls." The spirit of the public was paralized by discontent, and they looked on the passing scene with the calmness of disappointed credulity, or with the jeering jocularity of indifference. Every effort to rouse them was without effect. The king and princes hurried down to the Chamber of Deputies, and in a very solemn and impressive manner swore an eternal fidelity to the principles of the charter. But the season in which this engagement might have availed much, was passed. National enthusiasm, like private affection, when once destroyed, loses the capacity of being excited again. This public declaration, therefore, rather did harm than good, for it betrayed the perplexed condition of the king's affairs, and was an indirect acknowledgement of the past infraction of the charter. The president of the Chamber, M. Lainé, who is a fast friend to the Bourbons, but not a liberal, endeavoured to add solemnity to these acts of royal resipiscence, and cheer the langour of the public, by the fervour of his eloquence, and the liberality of his assurances. Whatever may have been, said he, the faults committed, this is not a time to examine them; but when France is delivered out of her present danger, she shall have every guarantee necessary to give security and duration to the liberties of her people! "Si la terre Française engloutit son oppresseur, des jours brillants se leveront sur un peuple réconcilié avec son gouvernement."

The necessity of doing something to conciliate the nation, was urged with vehemence by the liberals, and the king suggested at one time the dissolution of his obnoxious ministry, or the expulsion of its despotical members, to make room for persons of more popularity; but the ardour and alacrity with which the soldiers declared for the emperor, and the rapidity of his triumphant march, left him no leisure to try this experiment. The despotists, too, were hostile to the expedient, and would sooner have seen the government overthrown, than owing its preservation to their political opponents That party had attributed the consolidation of the imperial government to Fouché, and, anteriour to the landing of Napoleon, had not scrupled to recommend this Jacobin regicide to the king as a fit agent to accomplish their tyrannical purposes. They now first redoubled their efforts to bring him into power, and then suddenly prevailed on Louis to arrest him. The good eld king was thus so distracted by the wrangling of his discordant courtiers, and the variety of their factious views, that he remained almost inert, when every hour was the mother of some great event, which undermined the foundations of his throne. The expressions which his advisers rashly uttered, and the measures they imprudently took, recall Clarendon's description of the silly jealousies of the courtiers of Charles II. "They were so divided by private guarrels, factions, and animosities;--or so unacquainted with each other, or which was worse, so jealous of each other;---the understandings of many honest men were so weak and shallow that they could not be applied to any great trust; and others who wished and meant very well had a peevishness, frowardness, and opiniatrety, that they would be engaged only in what pleased themselves, nor would join in any thing with such and such men whom they disliked."

In proportion as the danger thickened, the jealous passions of the Constitutional and Ultra parties increased. Day after day was lost in idle recrimination. The Liberals contended that the only means of reviving the spirit of resistance was a change of ministry, the completion of the Chamber of Deputies, and the raising certain popular men to the peerage; whilst on the other hand the Ultras recommended a dictatorship, the suspension of private rights, the arrest of suspected persons, and the erection of arbitrary tribunals. The one party wished to conciliate the public, the other to frighten it. The friends of the charter, says M. Constant, had united themselves to the royal government in order to escape from a chief invested with unlimited power, and were therefore unwilling to see the king usurp the same authority and practise the same violence.* They considered the mational lukewarmness the result of ministerial duplicity, and that every stretch of authority would only tend to aggravate the evil, since despotism was never known to heal, like the lance of Achilles, the wounds it inflicted.

At that time there prevailed too among all parties a distrust of the integrity of the minister of war, (Soult) and, however unfounded it might have been, there was something impolitic at

* Lettres sur les cent jours.

least in retaining him in office. The king had promised to dismiss him as soon as he heard of Bonaparte's landing, but was prevailed on by the Ultras to postpone doing so, until three days after the surrender of Lyons, when he unwisely appointed the Duc de Feltre (Clarke) in his place. Perhaps no measure could have saved the royal government after the champion of France was on shore, yet there is strong reason to believe that the defection of Ney, which was fatal to it, might not have taken place, if it had thrown itself with alacrity into the arms of the nation, instead of conceding the necessary points so slowly as to leave the work of alienation to go on, until the minds of all were reconciled to revolt.

> "Mais s'est une imprudence assez commune aux rois D'ecouter trop d'avis et se tromper au choix; Le destin les avougle au bords du precipice."---CORNETLLE.

The difference between the Ultras and the Liberals on this occasion was that the former sacrificed their country to their party, and the latter sacrificed their party to their country. The king was undoubtedly hurried from Paris against his will. when, according to the assertion of Chateaubriand at Ghent, he had forty thousand men at his disposal; and hence in the exacerbation of party passion, the Liberals, who opposed that measure. went so far as to charge their adversaries with the voluntary abandonment of France, in order to return in the rear of the allies. and to precipitate themselves with fiercer vengeance on their prey. The Ultras alleged in justification of their flight with the king into Belgium, that a vast and terrible conspiracy was organized throughout France, and ready to open its tremendous jaws on them and the royal family. There were many circumstances at the time, no doubt, which gave the semblance of truth to that phantom of terror; but the vain efforts which that faction has subsequently made to substantiate the reality of such a plot can be ascribed only to a wish to find some excuse for the ridiculous panic which made them strike their armed heels

> "Against the panting sides of their poor jades, And seem in running to devour the way."

If any such conspiracy had existed, it must surely have been brought to light by the trials of Labedoyere, Ney, Lavalette, Druot, Cambronne, &c.; for who can believe that a nation should have conspired against its government, and that this govern-

ment, after its restoration, with the most searching police on earth at its command, and a million of foreign bayonets to support it, should have been unable to procure a single witness to prove the fact? That there were some individuals who secretly sighed for Napoleon's return, and who even spoke of it in the circle of the ex-queen Hortensia, I by no means pretend to deny; for who can suppose, that an Emperor, possessed, as he was, of such subduing powers of mind in society, and who had raised up so many families to distinction, could have gone into exile under the pressure of such untoward misfortunes, without carrying the regrets of a few along with him? But the restless velleity of a handful of disapppointed men is not the conspiration of a whole people; and a government which alienates public affection by the tortuous irregularity of its course, may fall by desertion, as well as by conspiracy. The descent of Bonaparte was, in fact, the extempore adventure of a desperate man, who. perceiving that the friends of the Bourbons had, by working about like moles under the ground, unsettled the foundations of their throne, imagined that it might be thrown down by a blow unexpectedly and audaciously given. The Emperor's language to Benjamin Constant on his return, when it was his interest to circulate a belief that France had recalled him, confirms my suggestion. "I came," said he, "without intelligence, without concert, and without preparation, holding the Paris journals, with the speech of M. Ferrand in my hand. When I had seen what is there said on the straight line and the crooked line, on the national domains and the army, I said to myself, 'France is mine.'" The event realized his expectation. The royal and the imperial scales stood balanced in public opinion, till the flight of the king lightened the one, and the sword of the Emperor caused the. other to preponderate. "The news of the occupation of Paris," wrote the Prefect of the Hautes Alpes, "has ranged our population on the side of Bonaparte."* "All resistance is vain," said that of Toulouse, "for the ancient throne of the Bourbons is fallen since its august chief has quitted France." In fact, the spirit of resistance to Napoleon may be said to have mounted into the king's carriage and galloped off along with him. Of the three bonds of loyalty which tie the hearts of subjects to their sove-

* Lettres sur les cept jours.

reigns, love, fear, and reverence, Louis XVIII. had not had time to win the first; he had not the martial energy which might have imposed the second; and whatever portion of the last he may have possessed at the time he made the noble declaration, that old and infirm as he was, he could not die more respectably than in defence of his crown, he lost it by his precipitate flight. By this he divided his cause from that of France, and finished the triumph of his adversary. The pithy reply of Constant to the libellist who impeached his integrity for not burying himself, on the 20th of March, under the ruins of the throne he had so vehemently defended on the 19th, expresses well the transition of opinion which the measure produced—"C'est que le 20, j'ai levé les yeux, j'ai vu que le trone avait disparu, et que la France restait encore."

I have heard a distinguished countryman, who was present on that occasion, say, that the Parisians looked on the change of the occupants of the Tuileries with incredible indifference; with the calmness of spectators, rather than the enthusiasm of But on the ensuing day, after men had had time to actors. recover from the astonishment which the change produced, the crowd sent forth, whilst the Emperor was reviewing the troops, a burst of applause, which was echoed back so like thunder from Montmartre, that one would have imagined he could have conquered the world. Innumerable men, in fact, who would have adhered to the Bourbons whilst they remained in France, and renounced foreign aid, went over to Napoleon the moment they were gone, and even took up arms against them, when they saw the banner of the lily borne along by the black eagle of Prussia and the double-headed monster of Austria; by the Russian bear and the lance of St. George.

LETTER XIV.

Paris, March S0th, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is still a question in France, whether the Liberals, after they discovered all opposition to the Emperor was over, should have retired from all active agency in the affairs of the new government, or have glided off to the frontiers after the king, as the suspected auxiliaries, "Cortege dedaignée" of the royal faction; or whether they should have rallied round Napoleon, in order to mitigate the severity of his government, and protect their country from invasion or dismemberment? With whatever difficulties, however, venal and subtle politicians may here choose to invest this question, posterity will, I presume, be of but one opinion on it; for, if I mistake not, the time is approaching when civilized nations will be of accord, that allegiance is due to one's country rather than to an individual man. The embankments of habit and authority may yet hold out for a time against the surges of reason and truth; but the sea of common sense is perpetually swelling; its waves rise higher and higher every day on the strand of error, and they render every hour some of the old inscriptions of prejudice less legible.

The support of Napoleon, when the independence of France became inseparable from the maintenance of his throne, did not necessarily imply an affection for his person, nor an approbation of his principles. The true wisdom of a patriot does not consist in the pursuit of that which is most beautiful in the visions of theory, but of that which is best in the actual condition of circumstances in which his country is placed. The choice between the probable loss of civil liberty, and the certain loss of national independence, is a cruel option to one who loves his country; but I presume there is no man, that has the soul of a man, who would hesitate in his election on such an occasion. This alternative must have presented itself to every reflecting mind during the hundred days; for whatever might have been the liberality of Napoleon's professions the moment he emerged so gloriously out of the winter of his adversity, it was but natural that the French should apprehend his relapse into tyranny.

When the king was gone-the chambers dissolved, and the emperor in the Tuileries, a gang of subjects, who had boasted to the Bourbons, of the cunning dexterity with which they had served Bonaparte, in order to betray him, re-appeared at the palace, and after outraging decency a second time, by proclaiming their new perfidy, advised Napoleon to adopt his old tyrannical system of government. In this state of things, whilst surrounded by those hase politicians, "qui n'inspirent aux rois que des mœurs tyranniques," he might have besitated a moment what course of policy to pursue. His nature, and twelve years habit inclined him to despotism; but he remembered that in his former prosperity he had relied in vain on terror, and that the popularity of the Bourbons had daily declined, after they began to substitute force for principle. Hence he concluded, that the best means of rousing the enthusiasm of his subjects, would be to profess a respect for their rights. But such was the natural repulsion between his character and liberty, that no hearty union could exist between them. The coalition, which followed, was kneaded together by the leaven of necessity, and hence there was so much of distrust in it, that the bone of public confidence may be said to have been calcined from the very beginning. During every hour of the hundred days, the exfoliations from it grew more alarming. The momentary enthusiasm which was kindled by his sublime exploit, and by those liberal proclamations which charmed France into submission, does not controvert the correctness of this position: although it might have caused him in the end, to relapse earlier into the heresies of his former life, as he mistook the approbation of his promises for an attachment to his person. When the constitution he had ordered to be drafted, was prepared in such a manner as to fill up the gaps and flaws which had yawned so offensively on the nation, in the late charter, he hesitated and refused to accept it, and thus betrayed the hopes he had awakened. He demanded that the arches of absolute power, which had supported his government before, should support it again; and in his

"additional act to the constitutions of the empire," submitted only to such modifications as fell short of public expectation, threw a damp on public confidence, and caused the wave of popularity which was buoying up his throne to retire from around it. Hence the French supported him with less zeal than he expected, and he found himself wanting in the balance against his enemies. Nor ought he to have expected more, for as he had chosen to divorce affection from duty in the hearts of his subjects, he might have foreseen the oscitant submission which followed his defeat. "La nation française n'attaque point son governement; mais elle s ecarte et il tombe."

At the same time, however, that "the additional act" of Napoleon deserves our censure, for the suspicion it awakened of the sincerity of his respect for representative government, it must be acknowledged to have approached nearer to the liberal system which the French deserve and desire, than the royal charter. It made the Peers hereditary, and more than doubled the chamber of Deputies, whilst it made the members eligible at 25, and gave it the appointment of its own president. It made the session of each chamber public, and gave each the right of proposing laws, as well as of interrogating ministers on the course of their policy. It declared the judges irremoveable; abolished the censorship of the press, and secured the right of petition to the subject. These and a few other concessions might have satisfied France, if Napoleon had not been impolitic enough to revive certain parts of the imperial government which were remembered with displessure. As soon as his chamber of Deputies met he perceived this, for they resolved immediately on the revision of his "act," which provoked him so violently, that if, in that critical state of affairs, when rebellion was threatening him from within, and invasion from without, he had dared to usurp absolute power, he would have taught them a lesson of obedience. But he then saw the necessity of temporizing, and in a fortnight he was brought, by destiny, to the condition of a private man.

If the Allies had let him alone, he might have yielded to public opinion; but after they had made a movement against him, it was all over with liberty in this country; for if he had succeeded in bearing them, he was ready the moment he felt himself firm on the pedestal of victory to exclaim, "by my sword I won my authority, and with my sword I will maintain it " That such would have been his conduct in the event of success, is I think pretty clear, not only from his nature, but from his evident willingness to digrace liberty by patronizing such liberticide scoundrels as Fou ché, and Merlin, and Barrere, &c. If he had never favoured these hyenas, during the period of his ascendant felicity, one might be disposed to admit that the perilous condition of his affairs, extenuated, although it could not excuse their present employment. The seeming reform of his political opinions would have been more clearly evinced by the rejection of those slippery jacobins, and he ought therefore to have avoided them, as their coalition with him, only served to revive the recollection of his past obliquities.

When he discovered war to be inevitable, his wisest policy would have been to resign his sceptre; for when France was full of intestine discord, and her whole circumference encircled by foreign bayonets, a terrible energy was necessary, and this he had so abused before, that as emperor he could never hope to excite it again. As dictator he might have done more, for the contest might then have appeared national in the eyes of the multitude. But Bonaparte was not a man from whom such a sacrifice to patriotism could have been expected. "Les habitudes du despotisme ne se perdent guere." In his early life he had disdained the illustrious example of Washington, and I fear it is a law of our nature, to grow less generous with age. I have heard one who knew him in his prosperous days, and who continued personally devoted to him in exile and adversity, observe, that al though he had no doubt Napoleon would, notwithstanding the arbitrariness of his temper, have submitted to legislative control, if the allies had not attacked him, he would scarcely have done so after being victorious over them. I must beg leave however to suggest that this suspicion stands contradicted by the most respectable testimony. Men of infinite acuteness and unquestionable veracity, and who were habitually inimical to him in his great career, were of a different opinion. "I believed and I still believe," said Carnot, (whilst the vengeance of the Bourbons was yet suspended over him,) "that Napoleon came back with the sincere desire of preserving peace, and of governing in such a manner as would have closed the train of our calamities, by suffering the resources of

the state to be turned to the encouragement of industry, the assuaging the condition of the indigent and the perfecting a system of national education." M. Constant, whose political abilities are of the first order, and who had been formerly exiled by Napoleon, for the rectitude of his free principles, states that the emperor, in a conference with him in April, neither attempted any deception, as to the nature of his intentions, or the conditions" of his affairs .--He says, that Napoleon spoke to him with that grandeur of expression, and large disdain of petty artifice, which might have been expected from one whose victories were unparalleled, and whose brows were shaded by immortal laurels. Without laying any claim to the merit of conversion to new principles by the lessons of adversity, or to the honour of fostering liberty from inclination, he inquired rapidly, but with all the impartiality of philosophical indifference, into what might best suit his interests. He observed, that although the nation had seemingly resumed a task for constitutions and harangues, it was evident from the precipitate joy, with which they hailed his return, that they wanted nothing but him; and that as for the noblesse, he had always seen them wince when his saddle pricked them, and considered their attachment to him as the fidelity of expedience. That the people on the contrary loved him from congeniality, and detested the nobles so bitterly, that they had never wanted more than a signal from him to annihilate them. "I never hated liberty, said he, but put her aside because she obstructed my views. I never oppressed the nation from pleasure, but from great designs. I wished the empire of the civilized world, and absolute power was necessary to me to secure it. But since I cannot be an universal conqueror I desire peace; and am convinced that for the government of France alone, a constitution may suit better, both the public and my son. I owe my sovereignty to the people, and must gratify their caprices. As I cannot make France the mistress of the world, I will make her the fairest portion of it. If I am to struggle with Europe for existence, nothing but liberty will tempt the French to support me. They shall have it then. "Des discussions publiques, des elections libres, des ministres responsables, la liberté de la presse-Je veux tout cela!»

The talents of Bonaparte were so superior to those of any other man, that it was difficult for him to bring himself to submit to control. It is said, he never was overcome in argument, and that no minister ever succeeded in turning him from any measure, by arging objections to it. His force and sagacity of mind were such that he was able not only to devour the objections of his opponent, but to turn them against him. The only way to stagger. his confidence was to state a strong idea, with peremptory boldness, and when he had torn it to pieces, to express the same opinion with brevity and firmness, but without exaggeration ---This might disconcert him, for when his mind had no other game to run after and destroy, it was disposed to stop short, to wheel about and examine the ground it had run over. By this operation, it is said by some one (I think M. Constant) that his sagacity was so instinctive that he would discover new objections, which had not been suggested to him, and thus begin to feel himself on the opposite side from his inclination. Madame de Stael, who knew him when the orb of his fortunes was yet a creacent, observes that he was the only man in conversation with whom she felt a difficulty of respiration-that he seemed, "plus ou moins qu'un homme," and that his words, like a cold and cutting sword, froze in wounding. Carnot is said to have been the first to discover his unparalleled genius, and to have made a singular prediction to a diplomatic gentleman who now holds a distinguished rank in the world, at a dejeuner à la fourchette which was given to him by the Directors, before his departure for the army of Italy, in '96. Bonaparte gave to his countenance on this occasion that look of "marble indifference" which he could assume at pleasure, said little, and retired early from table. When he was gone, the gentleman near Carnot observed to him, that his young general was at least accomplished in the art of keeping his thoughts to himself; to which the latter replied, "That young man, sir, who sat opposite, is born to pull down and put up empires."

The atrocious vengeance with which the Congress of Vienna denounced Napoleon, offended every honest mind in France.— No matter what may have been his former sins, he was then, by the recognition of all the powers, sovereign of Elba, and as such had a right, by the laws of nations, to invade any country that violated its treaties with him. That his abdication of his crowns was on certain stipulated conditions, and that his enemies, when they discovered the shallowness of his popularity in France, repented of having allowed him such liberal terms, and chose to forget them and to violate them too, can scarcely be dealed. What apology then, is there for that declaration of outlawry, by which they invited an assassination of him; or does the panic precipitation with which they issued it and then dispersed from Vienna, palliate, much less justify, such a disdain of the morals of the age? If they and magnanimity had not been strangers, they might have remembered how different was, in the language of Corneille, the conduct of Cornelia, who had experienced great wrongs from the hand of Casar, but who, in revealing to him a conspiracy to kill him, exclaimed; "I wish for your ruin, but I would intercept with my heart the blow of an assassin, because your death would not then be a punishment, but a crime.—Si je veux ton trepas, c'est en juste ennemie."

For the honour of human nature, I rejoice that the brother of the Duke of Wellington felt it his duty to declare solemnly in the British parliament, that his great kinsman was struck with horror, when he heard the interpretation which was put on that proclamation Yet it must be admitted, I think, that a man of his great sagacity and rectitude, was wanting to himself in not examining the nature of the outlawry before he signed it. There are two other acts of the Duke, which have impaired the clarity of his glory; and which, it is to be hoped, he will not suffer to ge down to posterity enveloped in mystery. I allude to his refusal to intercede for Ney, and to a late vote in the House of Lords. Nev's treason admits of no apology, and may have merited punishment. But if he might have escaped out of France, as it is believed he might, and if he remained under an idea that he was protected by the Convention of Paris, he ought not to have been shot. To say that the royal government was not bound by a capitulation entered into by its re-establishers, the Allied Generals, is the most shallow subterfuge ever invented by the worshippers of tyranny to cover the obliquities of crime. It is one, the Duke of Wellington would disdain to countenance; and therefore, as there is something so beautiful in leaning on the side of mercy, and as the death of Ney, since the allies were to remain in France, answered no end but that of vengeance, (as may be isferred from the escape and late pardon of Lavalette.) the world

is entitled to some explanation of the motives of the Buke, for his unamiable silence and reserve on that occasion.

The other act of Wellington which has surprised his admirers, was his sending over his proxy, on a late occasion, from France, to record his vote, when it was not wanting, against the emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland. As he knew there would be a great majority of the Lords against it, and as he could not be present to hear the reasoning on either side; as it was his native land which claimed reliet, and as his own glory had been built up in part by the valour of Catholic soldiers, one would think he might have abstained from an act, which, if loyal to his sovereign, was unfilial to his country. His name is one of the few which must inevitably go down to future ages; and whatever may be the confidence of his friends in the rectitude of his mind, they should take care not to let his reputation descend with suspicions, which, if confirmed by time, would tarnish its lustre for ever.

It has been much believed in foreign countries, that the army only of France was attached to Bonaparte, and that the body of the nation secretly regretted his success. As European nations are organized, no revolution can take place without the consent or concurrence of the military; and I much question whether the cabal of despots will not hereafter lay hold on this circumstance as a pretext for intermeddling in the internal affairs of every nation: and the prevention of any change. If the soldiery of France were all so eager to maintain Napoleon, how does it happen that . of the twenty old Marechals, whose names had been rendered familiar to fame by the victories of twenty campaigns, that there were, but, perhaps two, Soult and Ney, on the field at Waterloo? Davoust, it is true, was in the ministry; Brune was in service; and the gallant Suchet commanded the eastern frontier; but where were Moncey, McDonald, Augereau, Massena, Berthier, Marmont, Oudinot, Victor, Bessières, Serrurier, Gouvion St. Cvr. Lefebvre, Jourdan, Mortier, Kellerman, &c. If these men were conspirators to bring back Napoleon, why were they not on horseback on the 18th of June? Why were not the six grand columns of the French commanded, each, by a marechal? Why was the left wing directed by the King Admiral Jerome, and why was Grouchy left alone at Wavre? The young generals fought valiantly, no doubt, at Waterloo-perhaps the chivalry of

32

France never shone brighter than on that day; but I presume it cannot be denied, that many of them were comparatively new actors on the stage, and that there never was an army, which stood more in need of that contingent self-confidence and energy, which are communicated to young troops, especially by great names.

In truth, there prevailed a considerable difference of opinion in France during the hundred days. Many who would have supported Napoleon with enthusiasm, if they could have confided in his promises, were rendered lukewarm by seeing that he retained the right of confiscation, and threatened, when he felt his will contraried, to make his opponents feel the arm "le vieux bras" of the Emperor. There are several circumstances mentioned by M. Constant, which evince a strong resilient propensity in Napoleon for his old system. That he would, however, if the allies had let him alone, have given France a better government than she ever had, in order to gratify the public, and that he would have entered into a very liberal coalition and commercial intercourse with England, in order to render constitutional Europe stronger than desputic Europe, there is, I think, no doubt As the interests of England had been forgotten or sacrificed at the Congress of Vienna; as Russia, Austria, and Prussia, as well as the minor states, had been suffered to aggrandize themselves in territory, wealth and population; and as England only had surrendered some of her acquisitions, without receiving even a commercial privilege, common sense ought to have induced her to avail herself of the present opportunity of gaining something. But unluckily for the real prosperity of England, the vanity of Lord Castlereagh and his coadjutors had hammered them into a sort of identity with the Legitimates, and therefore they determined to fight Bonaparte, right or wrong. Whether they did not embrace a cloud instead of a goddess, I am willing to leave to posterity to determine.

Before the Emperor's departure **fight** the army, his brother Lucien, who has been as uniformly distinguished for probity of heart and attachment to liberty, as for the brillianey of his elocution, the dexterity of his address, and the amenity of his manners, suggested the propriety of leaving some one at the head of the government, and the gratification the appointment would afford him. But Napoleon, who thought Lucien too much of a republican, and who was already irritated by the independent spirit of the Corps legislatif, is said to have replied, "you might as well ask me to take the crown off my own head and put it on yours."— The new legislature was in fact, (netwithstanding the calumnies with which the friends of feudal and monastic tyranny have traduced it,) remarkably well composed. One or two ignominious jacobins, and a dozen or two chameleon politicians do not justify the imputations which have been cast on it.

Napoleon says, that after his arrival in Paris, he deliberated on the propriety of commencing hostilities instantly with 35,000 The English and Prussian forces were then weak and men. scattered; Wellington was at Vienna, and Blucher at Berlin. But against so hardy an adventure there were many powerful considerations to deter him. The French desired peace, and would have condemned the rashness of an offensive movement. The public opinion in French Flanders was too much divided to justify a sudden removal of the garrisons out of the fortresses of that "iron frontier." The Duc d'Angouleme was still endeavouring to rouse the courage of the revalists in the south, and the expulsion of the whole Bourbon family was essential to prevent civil war. The allies too, had after the first conquest, proclaimed a willingness to let France chuse her own governors, and might now perhaps be induced to yield to an unequivocal expression of her wishes; and even if they should not, there was some chance by being moderate, of seducing the Emperor of Austria from the confederacy. These last hopes, it is true, proved fallacious after the movement of Murat in Italy; but this is not a sufficient reason for condemning him for entertaining them.

Napoleon also states,* that when there remained no longer any hope of maintaining peace, he canvassed in his own mind the relative advantages of resting entirely on the defensive at home, or of attempting to dissolve, by a hurricane attack, the cloud that was gathering against him. By waiting for the allies, he might have augmented and consolidated his forces—trained and accustomed them to their commanders; completed the fortifications of Paris and Lyons; settled his new government; selected his ground of defence, and inspired the nation with the resolution of despair.

* See the 9th book of his memoirs.

But this plan of defence, would have left his enemies time to embody a million of men on his frontiers; would have abandoned to devastation all the eastern and northern departments of France; and would have deprived him of all resource in case of defeat. Besides, a victory was necessary to prevent a rebellion in France, to confirm the fidelity of the wavering, and to reconcile all parties to the war. The defeat of the British and Prussian armies was particularly desirable, because it would give Belgium an opportunity of declaring for him; because it might have overthrown the British ministry, and brought the whigs who had opposed the war into power, and because it would have enabled him to reinforce himself by detachments; to advance with a triumphant army to the Rhine, and prevent the junction of the Russian and Austrian forces. He therefore embraced the resolution of attacking the allied army in Belgium, and he made his preparations for it so skilfully, that but for a few unprosperous incidents, he must have succeeded in this enterprize. His army amounted to 140,000 men, all animated by the best spirit, and commanded by gallant young officers, all of whom perhaps, except Bourmont, did their duty. Of this officer, it is said, that after behaving well in expostulating with Ney, against his treason to the king, he retired, and then solicited, and obtained an appointment from the emperor, whose confidence he abused, by absconding to the enemy, by whom he was borne back to Paris, to be the witness against that ill-fated marshal.

The insurrection which broke out in La Vendee, was a disastrous accident for Napoleon, for it compelled him to withdraw 20,000 men from his army of attack; and the inclemency of the weather which preceded the battle of Waterloo, was perhaps not less injurious to his fortunes, than the snows of Russia. Without pretending to enter into the details of the campaign; or to inquire into the comparative abilities of the two great captains who conducted it, and on which subject men yet awhile judge after national prejudices, I cannot forbear making a remark or two on the battle, before I come to suggest the effects of it on the French nation.

Bonaparte states it to have been his intention to overthrow the Prussians and English simultaneously on the 16th of June, and attributes his failure in accomplishing it, to a halt of the left wing of his army under Ney, for some hours, on its march to Quaytre Bras, in consequence of a distant cannonade at Ligny. He was so rejoiced however, in having defeated Blucher and separated him from Wellington, that he saw but little danger except from their reunion under the walls of Brussels, where they would have had the forest of Soignies in their front. When he perceived therefore, that Wellington had taken a stand in front of the wood, he was in great haste to fight, lest his adversary should fall back to the position which he dreaded; and although he knows full well that victory covers a multitude of errors in a general, he has persevered in calling the resolution to fight on Mont St. John, "the great fault" of his adversary. Napoleon imagined on that day, that what had happened at Que tre Bras, would happen again at Waterloo-that the British would be unable to withstand the fiery impetuosity of his troops-and that in falling back through the forest, they would lose their artillery, and be entirely destroyed. He underrated the sturdy valour of the troops he had to deal with, and in his eagerness for victory, overlooked the disadvantages of his own situation.

He says, that the absence of Grouchy's detachment at Wavre. and of Girard's at Ligny, left him only 69,000 men for action, of which 10,000 were despatched under Lobau to check Bulow; and he estimates his enemies at 90,000. In addition to this imagined disproportion of numbers, he might have recollected, that his troops were excessively fatigued by incessant marching and fighting during four days in the heat of summer-that they had got no sleep on the night of the 17th, in consequence of the rain, and of the movements necessary to take up a position on the field of battle, which was only accomplished, on the morning of the 18th, at the moment he announced his resolution to attack-that the allied army on the contrary had slept a little-was advantageously posted, and partially protected by Hougoumont and La Haie Saintethat it was determined to act on the defensive, and would be therefore comparatively stationary during the battle; that its line was convex, and consequently more compact than his own; and that his own troops would be obliged to make every charge over ploughed fields, rendered deep and miry by the print Notwithstanding these obstacles to success, he resolved to give battle, and he ordered the charge, although he admits that all his officers

have not the presumption to censure any of the movements of so great a captain as Napoleon, even now that their consequences are known, and I am free to admit, that if he conceived Grouchy's corps too weak to hold the Prussians at bay, his situation was critical in the extreme. But since the entire separation of Wellington from Blucher was, next to victory, his great object, I have never been able to imagine why his first violent assaults were not made against the left wing of the English, instead of being wasted, (without the aid of artillery,) on the garden walls of Hougoumont, which was on the British right, and which position must have been abandoned, if the French had driven the centre of the allied army from the height it occupied. "What great events from trivial causes spring" has been well said by a poet, and it is not impossible that it was a trifling oversight only, which converted the field of Waterloo, into "the dust of an empire."-As Napoleon knew the brave vivacity of the French in the onset of a battle, and their want of confidence and constancy, if staggered before the close of it; as he knew from the beginning (from a captured hussar,) that the Prussians were marching on St. Lambert, which was close on his right-that Count Lobau was engaged with them at four or five o'clock since their bullets were then falling around him in the centre of his army-as he knew that Bulow was repulsed before six o'clock, at which moment every thing promised victory,-is it not surprising that he delayed the grand attack until after sunset, near eight o'clock, at which time Blucher had reached La Haie, and was attacking him on the right?

I have been told by one of the emperor's *etat major* who was near him on a little hillock, by the road side, close to the centre of the conflict, that when the Prussians burst like a cloud over the hills of La Haie, Napoleon with a look of collected awe, cast his eyes alternately on them and then on his own troops, which were advancing to the last charge. He seemed to be full of courage and expectation, till he beheld the imperial guard recoiling down the hill of St. John in terrible disorder. His bridle then fell—he **burget** handfull of snuff—applied it convulsively to his nose; fixed his eyes on the ground, and wore on his countenance an expression of horror that bordered on the apathy of Whilst this dreadful scene was passing at Waterloo the news of the victories of Ligny and Quartre Bras reached Paris, and were circulated by telegraph over the empire. Enthusiasm was at its acme, and every heart seemed elated with joy, at the saving of the country. It was, however, as if fortune wished to make a sport of this nation, for in the midst of this ebullition of patriotism, and whilst expectation was on tip toe for the capture of the allied army, and the conquest of Belgium, the news of defeat arrived. The imperialists were prostrated by it; the friends of rational liberty and national independence were overwhelmed with sorrow; the Jacobins were perplexed how to unsay what they had said on the news of victory; and a small party rejoiced at the calamity. The Emperor was aware that the Deputies were not attached to his person, but had only made use of him as an agent to save France, and would not therefore be disposed to sacrifice her to keep him on the throne. It was this conviction much more than the report, which the royalists circulated of a defeat in La Vendée, that caused his precipitate return to Paris.

I have heard the French nation harshly condemned by many, and even by yourself, for abandoning Napoleon at this terrible crisis of his affairs. But what would you have had them do more? They had not invited him from Elba. He came among them in the hour of their discontent, and they received and made a great effort to support him. They put the lance and the shield of France in his hands, and he had now shivered the one, and broken the other. Was it the duty of patriots to expose their country to entire devastation, and to ruin the prosperity of

٩

thirty millions of people, in order to maintain an individual on the throne? Or was it their duty, when they knew they must have a bad government at any rate, to succumb to circumstances, and to diminish as far as possible the hardships they were obliged to endure? One thing was then evident to every reflecting Frenchman, that it was impossible to rekindle the ardour and confidence of the nation; for the public mind of France was something like a tide that had spent itself with running—and was standing still, and ready to turn another way.

The night after Napoleon's return to Paris he called a council of the ministers of state and of such distinguished members of the two chambers, as it was important to consult on ulteriour measures. He revealed to them the extent of the calamity which had befallen him, and demanded through his minister, Regnaud, succours for "the astonished Eagle." Lafayette stated, with the manliness which has always characterized him in the midst of personal or public affliction, that further resistance could only aggravate the misfortunes of France,-that the allies could not be expected after a victory to recede from the demand on which , they had declared the war, and that therefore it was for the great and generous spirit of the Emperor to divine the sacrifice by which only their vengeance might be averted from France. This was the first and last compliment of La Fayette to Bonaparte, and it was not made till the adulation of his courtiers was over. The suggestion was supported by Lanjuinais and Constant; but Bassano maintained the expedience of further resistance, and denounced the smiling treachery of Fouché. In this slippery posture of his affairs, the Emperor, gloomy and irresolute, dissolved the council.

A similar desire, however, that the Emperor should sacrifice his power for the good of France prevailed in the chamber of deputies. Lucien made an eloquent appeal to the generosity, love of glory, and fidelity of the nation to his brother; but Lafayette replied that the nation had been faithful and generousthat its fidelity stood attested by the bones of Frenchmen on the sands of Egypt, the snows of Russia, and the plains of Belgiumthat it had made a great sacrifice for him, and had, therefore, a right to demand a great sacrifice in return. The emergency it must be admitted was dreadful. France was on the brink of

The allied army was marching rapidly on Paris, and inruin. surrection was organizing itself in various sections of the coun-In such a state of things there would have been at least as try. much of insanity as of chivalry in the resolution to prolong the The Chamber of Deputies, therefore, awaited with excombat. cessive impatience on the 22nd, for an .act which might divorce the cause of the nation from that of the Emperor, and their unshaken determination to have it, extorted from him his abdica-If Napoleon's regret at parting from his authority arose tion. from a conviction that the declarations of the allies against him were insincere, and that they were determined at all events to glut their vengeance on France, or if it arose from a belief that the loss of a rallying point at that critical moment would cause the nation to fall to pieces, and surrender, as it actually did, at discretion, he deserves as much praise for clinging to the wreck, as he does for his untyrannical conduct during the hundred days. Let us not then suspect him of a more selfish consideration, for, as Cicero said of Cæsar, we have matter enough to admire in him, and would therefore willingly see something to praise. The deprecation which accompanied the declaration that his political life was finished, and that he offered himself as a sacrifice to the hatred of the enemies of France, evinces an apprehension of their bad faith; and the magnanimous allies took care to verify his suspicions.

The despair that paralyzed the arm of Napoleon, unsinewed also the cause of the country. The dangerous influence of Fouché compelled the Chambers to make him a member of the provisional government. The soul of this man always gravitated to treachery. He was cunning by nature, and adroit by practice in the wiles of perfidy. During this brief reign of Napoleon he is said to have carried on a regular correspondence with Ghent and London. The man, who is false, says Lord Bolingbroke, to the cause of his countre, will not be true to any other, and Fouché first betrayed the interest of France, and then, that of the persons who acted with him. He saw that it would not be practicable to maintain young Napoleon on the throne, and therefore laid a scheme of surrendering the nation unconditionally into the hands of the king, in order to become the favorite of the royalists.

When national affairs are brought to a perilous crisis, a numerous executive is almost inevitably an inefficient body. The time, which it should employ in action, is lost in debate, and delay on many occasions is as fatal as defeat. The nomination of five governors was therefore an error on the part of the chambers; but it was probably inevitable, since it would have been impossible to unite their suffrages in favour of any one individual, and it was necessary to colleague the influence of several, in order to soothe the anger of the army, and to quiet the alarms of the people. As circumstances afterwards turned out, the abdication of Napoleon was perhaps unfortunate both for himself and for France:---for at the head of one or two hundred thousand men, who were still at his disposal, he might have made better terms than those afterwards dictated by the soi-disant generous allies.

During the sojourn of Napoleon at Malmaison, after his abdication, he is said to have been frequently agonized by the distractions which prevailed in the Provisional Council. At one time, when he clearly perceived that the national honour and independence would be inevitably sacrificed by their want of unanimity, he was on the point of yielding to the solicitations of the army, and assuming, in the name of his son, the dictatorship. But he was narrowly watched by those who had other schemes in view, and who dreaded the consequences of his embracing that audacious resolution. This apparent wavering, or irresolution, has been much scoffed at by that race of shallow prattling politicians, who take peculiar delight in deriding the conduct of Napoleon, when abandoned by fortune; and who fancy they are rendering homage at the shrine of legitimacy, by denying him even the possession of personal courage. They can see no difference between the duties of an Emperor, and of a mere general, after defeat; and, therefore, they adduce his quitting the army after its overthrow in Russia, as a proof that he, who had fought his way through ten thousand perils to the highest rank on earth, was destitute of bravery. There are persons, however, who have even snarled at the tear which he shed on the grave of Josephine, in the village church of Nanterre, when

he was on the point of leaving France for ever; and who have reviled, as ignominious, the mistaken confidence he placed in the British government. They once reproached him for not having died at Moscow, because, in the language of a poet,

"Il est beau de mourir maitre de l'univers;"

and they condemned him, whilst in Elba, for not having committed suicide when his guard wept at his farewell address at Fontainebleau. They did not remember, what he himself remembered, that if Marins had killed himself in the marshes of Minturnæ, he would never have enjoyed the seventh consulship. But let us leave such politicians to the enjoyment of their silly upbraidings. Their heroes of the Holy Alliance will live long enough, if I mistake not, to show the genuineness of their magnanimity, and the sincerity of their pretended respect for liberty.

As to Napoleon, whatever may have been the severity of 'his first reign, his conduct during the second was indicative of a high sense of patriotism, liberality, and justice. When he first ascended the throne, the French required, in his opinion, a strong government to brace up the bonds of society, which had been dissolved by the revolution. If, afterwards, great projects swayed him from a course of liberal policy, and induced him to rule the nation with rigour, it should be remembered that he was seated on a new throne which it might have been difficult to maintain without terror, as his enemies did not hesitate to adopt any measure to bring him to the ground. After his return from Elba, as it would have been no longer in his power to enchant the French by conquest, there is but little doubt he would have endeavoured to captivate their affections by liberality. Those who doubt the sincerity of his reform, may do well to remember, that even the cruel and tyrannical Octavius became the mild and beneficent Augustus; so that it was said of him, it would have been better for mankind, if he had never been born, or if he never had died.*

It is even yet the fashion in Europe to decry Napoleon, and to forget the great works which he executed. Among the

* "Aveo	ordre et raison les honneurs il dispen	se
Avec	discernement punit et recompense.	

Et dispose de tout en juste possesseur

Sans rien précipiter de peur d'un successeur."-CINNA.

nations, however, which he conquered, the advantages of his government over the old tyrannies are so distinctly felt, that no doubt exists among them, that if he had over run the whole continent, it would have been a blessing to mankind. Knowledge is now so generally diffused, that no scheme of universal monarchy can succeed; and the governments which would have been erected, when the empire fell to pieces at the death of Napoleon, would have been more congenial with existing civilization. The present generation, perhaps, must pass away (even if Napoleon should die in confinement) before his conduct can be fairly judged. When the hatred which his late greatness inspired, and the sympathy which his present forlorn condition excites, have subsided, a correct opinion will be formed of his character. Mankind will then determine whether it might not have been more merciful to have shot him as soon as he surrendered, than to have torn him from his family and friends; to imprison him on the most wretched rock in the world, under the rays of a tropical sun, and exposed, as it is here believed he is, to the tormenting caprices of one of the most vexatious and tyrannical gaolers that could have been selected in all Europe. Those who love the honour and glory of England, have, perhaps, reason to apprehend, that posterity will regard the present treatment of Napoleon, as we regard the treatment which Mary received at the hands of Elizabeth. The longer he lives the better it will be for England; for when he is no more, the Autocrat will drop the mask which covers his real character, and the inhuman ambition of the Holy Alliance will appear in all its naked deformity.

LETTER XV.

Paris, April 1st, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

As the charge of political fickleness is thrown into the face of the French for every change of their government, it may be worth while to look a little into the situation of France during the invasion of 1815, as well as at the librations of public opinion which grew out of it. By doing so, we may determine whether the change of government which followed, was the voluntary act of a versatile people, or whether it was a choice of evils in an hour of retribution, when all the armies of Europe were pavilioned on the plains of this unfortunate country.

Immediately after the battle of Waterloo, Wellington poured his victorious legions into France by the northern route of Cambray; and it gives me pleasure to confirm, by the testimony of the French themselves, your impression of the honourable humanity of this general's conduct. The thirst for plunder, and the licentious propensities of the soldiery, were so effectually reined in by the stern hand of his authority, that the private property of the French suffered less from the passage of his army, than it had done from the movements of their own forces. The march of Blucher, on the contrary, who rushed into France by the route of Laon and Soissons, was contrasted in every particular with that of the English general. He moved like a blast of vengeance over the land-horror preceded, and desolation followed him. The cries of the French were music to his ears; and wherever he halted, misery fixed herself, like the nightmare, on the breasts of the peaceful and unoffending peasantry. At the same time that these armies were hurrying on from the north to Paris to avail themselves of the trepidation which their victory had occasioned, the British fleets blockaded the western coasts of France; the Spanish forces were breaking over the Pyrenees

into the lukewarm provinces of the south; and the whole eastern frontier was covered by the German and Russian armies.

A Bavarian and Austrian army under Wrede scattered the forces which opposed them, and overran the whole country from Nancy to the capital of Champagne. Another German army, after storming the position of Rapp at Vandenheim, invested him in Strasburg. An Austrian army, under Ferdinand, entered Alsace from Basle, and after defeating Lecourbe, overran the whole of Franche Comté. Another under Frimont drove Suchet from Geneva, and then rushed on into Burgundy. The powerful army under Bubna, which had defeated Murat, crossed the Alps, and after chasing the French out of Savoy, advanced through Dauphiny on Lyons, where it halted to indulge a most vindictive spirit. The grand Russian army also, to make "assurance doubly sure," crossed the Rhine at Spires, and marched on the capital through Lorraine.

Such was the tremendous military visitation of France in July 1815, when a part of La Vendee, Languedoc, and Provence, were in arms for the Bourbons, and when the abdication of the Emperor had caused the army, the federates, and the national guard, to consider the cause of the country as abandoned. The French soldiery had been animated by the best spirit, but a suspicion of treachery in some of their leaders pervaded the ranks before the opening of the campaign, and some of the wounded men, on the field of Waterloo, are said to have killed themselves, rather than survive the national disgrace. Their pride did not suffer them to think the battle lost by any thing but treason. Some gave up the public cause as ruined after this defeat, and returned to their homes; but the greater part of the survivors were embodied in Paris, when the combined army reached there, and among them despair had rather sharpened than blunted a disposition to fight. Several sharp rencontres took place in the neighbourhood, and a resolution to fight to the last against the Bourbons, whilst there remained a chance of success, seemingly prevailed in Paris. But the allies, by a dextrous movement, gained the left bank of the Seine, and approached the city on the southern side, where the enthusiasm of the garrison was its only fortification. Under these circumstances, it was the almost unanimous opinion of the officers of the army, that Paris was untenable. Two of

the members of the provisional government, Fouché and Caulaincourt, were in favour of surrendering it to the Bourbons; but the majority, Carnot, Quinette and Grenier, thought it less dishonourable to capitulate to the allied generals. The former was the expedient, the latter was the consistent course. It was this, too, which was least offensive, both to the populace and the chambers, among whom there prevailed at the time a violent hostility to the Bourbons, and a faint hope that the allies might possibly be satisfied with the exclusion of Napoleon from the throne. The soldiers marched out of the city with the sullen reluctance of indignant patriotism, but behaved with admirable propriety, considering the heavy pressure of despondency and discontent under which they laboured. But even after their departure, so vehement was the sense of public wrong among the populace, that the allies entered Paris with their arms loaded, and torches burning, in readiness for action. The executive, finding its deliberations embarrassed by the presence of the enemy, and its measures frustrated by the ambitious schemes of Fouché, dissolved itself. The chambers, however, struggled to the last for independence and liberty; but the enemy soon excluded them from their halls by the bayonet, and gave them to understand, that in the opinion of the Holy Allies, "le pire des états, c'est l'état populaire."

Louis XVIII. entered France after the allied army, and in a proclamation at Cambray, he announced that the gates of his kingdom were again open before him; that the principle of the legitimacy of sovereigns was the fundamental basis of social order: that it had been consecrated by the charter, and was now the declared public law of Europe. But along with this ill-omened feudal folly, he intimated a rational consciousness of the errors of his past government; made a protest against the counter-revolutionary projects imputed to him, and gave a solemn assurance that the charter should be the law of his future policy. Many of the French condemned him for entering France in the rear of foreign armies; but surely this step was the most rational one for the advancement of the public good, although it was calculated to shock public opinion; for since "on ne renonce pas aux grandeurs legitimes," and he was willing to re-establish his throne by the power of the allies, it would have been highly

ridiculous in him to have shown a punctilious squeamishness, as to the decorum of entering in company with those who opened the way for him. He could not have adopted any course of conduct free from objections; and as every sensibility of his nature must have been in agony, he was, entitled to some indulgence. A strong effort was made at St. Denis, to induce him to soothe the public feelings, by adopting the national cockade; and he might have yielded perhaps, but for the repugnance of his family, who unhesitatingly averred they would sooner see him go back to England. They considered the abandonment of the lily as a renunciation of their divine right to the crown; as an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the people, and even pushed their notions so far, as to imagine it would be a sanction of the crimes of the revolution. Before leaving Belgium, the king had made a sacrifice, which warranted the hope of his yielding this point. He had taken the resolution of removing from his government those obnoxious persons who had wrecked his fortunes, but a few months before. He wrote accordingly to Blacas, that he owed it to the repose of the few days he had to live, to the tranquillity of the world, and the counsel of his allies, to deprive him of the office he held. This conciliatory measure lulled, in France, the apprehensions of some, and neutralized the hostility of others; but the general exasperation was too great to be allayed by such gentle anodynes. The king therefore entered his capital under very different circumstances from those under which he entered it on the former occasion. Instead of songs of praise, and anthems of joy, silence and sadness prevailed every where; and a few white handkerchiefs alone greeted the mournful triumph.

The king soon discovered that he was not come back to repose on a bed of roses—to enjoy a second honey moon of power; but to have his heart lacerated by the recrimination of wrangling factions, and the insulting arrogance of his hostile allies. They believe in England, that the army only rejoiced on the return of Bonaparte; but that the restoration of the Bourbons excited universal joy among all classes, except the soldiery and the Jacobins. Yet, although the French army was cut to pieces, and a million of bayonets opening the way to Paris, it took the latter as long to travel from Ghent to this city, as it took the former, unaided and unassisted, to march from Cannes! The king felt that the circumstances under which he returned were inauspicious; and in order to appease the public wrath, or to quiet the apprehension of a counter-revolution, nominated before he entered Paris, a revolutionary ministry, and gave a solemn assurance of governing after the principles of his charter. Talleyrand was placed at the head of the ministry, and although he was too unprincipled to possess the public confidence, his opposition to a violent re-action tended to assuage the imperious indignation of the public. The appointment of the regicide Fouché likewise produced a favourable impression; for, notwithstanding the general disgust at his treachery, he was possessed of immense influence, and his nomination proved that Louis was capable of sacrificing his private feelings to a sense of public good. Fouche did something too, in the short period he held the seals, to atone for the sins of his earlier life. He had sufficient dexterity to assume the character of a mediator between the nation and the Bourbons, and laid a subtile scheme to render himself a necessary clasp for uniting the links of the revolution to the chain of legitimacy. He advised the king to discard those who fled with him to Ghent; to put himself at the head of the nation, and not to appear as the leader of the emigrant faction. As he was not able to prevail on Louis to grant an universal amnesty, he exerted himself to limit as much as possible, the proscription. But in spite of the conciliating policy of the new ministry, the king found himself in the most embarrassing predicament; for the royalists were clamorous for vengeance, and the nation for the retirement of the foreign armies. France was treated in every particular as a conquered country, in spite of the declaration that the war was against Napoleon only; and the ministers were at last obliged to address an expostulation to the king, both against the pernicious zeal of the royalists, and the highly insulting pretensions of the allies. They warned the king that the ultra-royalists, encouraged by the princes of his family, were hurrying France to the brink of ruin by counteracting his benevolent intentions; whilst the allies were ravaging her provinces, seizing the funds of the treasury, plundering the royal magazines and fortresses, despoiling the public monuments, and removing the master-pieces of art.

Their suggestions, however, that the nation might become desperate from the continuance of outrage were disregarded; and as it became evident that electoral colleges, (awed by foreign bayonets, and menaced by the emigrant cabal,) could not return men with French feelings to the new chamber, they resigned.

The king deprecated the rage of his private friends, and therefore selected his new ministers from among those moderate men who had acquired reputation under the imperial government, and who, if they did not feel much attachment for liberty, were not likely to fall into an excess of tyranny. He placed at us nead the Duc de Richelieu, a man of great probity and respectability, who was likely to be agreeable to the royalists from his genealogy, and to the emperor Alexander, from having long served him as governor of Odessa. In the negociations with the allied ministers which ensued, Richelieu distinguished himself by a manly zeal, in combating their exorbitant and ungenerous demands. But for fifteen months after the second restoration, France was compelled to suffer the bitterest affliction. The presence of a million of soldiers for some months was in itself a tremendous evil, on the score of humiliation, independent of the infamous depredations they committed. I allude to domestic pillage and not to the robbery of the Louvre; which latter act was justifiable (except so far as it violated the compact with Louis,) on various grounds. The only advantage of collecting the chefs d'œuvres of art in one gallery, was the facility it gave artists of seeing them. But on the other hand where so many were huddled together, they were regarded with less interest; were subject to entire destruction from a single fire; and to be carried off to a bad climate by the first northern conqueror. Besides, I believe that no one who has seen the descent from the cross in the cathedral at Antwerp-or the Venus de Medicis, looking all grace and loveliness in her little temple on the banks of the Arno; or gazed at the god of the unerring bow, "with his nostrils snorting beautiful disdain," on his pedestal in the matchless galleries of the Vatican, could ever wish to see such monuments of genius stuck up in the corners of the Louvre. There is no association of ideas in Paris to throw a halo over them. But in Italy there is something inspiring in the very face of the country-something so ennobling in the recollections it awakens, that I think every soul of feeling must rejoice, to see it still "the home of all art yields, or nature can display."

France had been lulled into tranquillity by the false promises of the Allies, and was in no condition to resist their demands in the autumn of 1815. The best terms she could procure, were the relinquishment of her monuments of art; the surrender of a part of her territory; the delivery of her frontier fortresses into the hands of her enemies; the payment of seven hundred millions of francs to defray the expences of the war; the military occupation of her territory by 150,000 men, and the support of them for five years. These were hard conditions, and taught the French an evident fact, that the vices of legitimate sovereigns, as well as those of usurpers, do grow, like crocodiles, as long as they live—

"Equand par le fer les choses sont vidées

La justice et le droit sont de vaines idées."--Mort de Pompée.? It will no doubt be a matter of surprise to posterity, that End after winning the late victory should have again failed, as

d after winning the late victory should have again failed, as at r the first restoration, to obtain any reward for her services. It vas said of her, after the peace of Utrecht, that it was her custom to lose in negociation all the advantage she had gained in the field. On the late occasions she displayed a signal improvidence. For more than twenty years she had been the lever of every confederacy against France. She expended hundreds of millions of pounds, and hundreds of thousands of lives, and for what-to replace the Bourbons on the thrones of France, Spain, and Naples, without the privilege of even selling their subjects her manufactures-to give Poland to Russia-Saxony to Prussia, and Italy to Austria-to destroy her trade with Holland, by giving it to Belgium and a king-and to exclude her ships from the free cities of Genea and Venice, by merging their independence in the pool of despotism. That her negociators should have made all those generous blunders, whilst the fear of Bonaparte was yet fresh in their minds, is not so extraordinary, as the repetition of them after the second restoration. The battle of Waterloo carried the military reputation of England to the highest point of renown, yet when the future men of that country, ask "of what use was it?" I am disposed to apprehend they can receive no other answer than that "it was a splendid victory." It enabled her, to be sure, to confirm her magnificent donations to her nominal friends on the

У

continent; to have General Wellington placed at the head of the army of occupation; and to send General Bonaparte to St. Helena. But, what territory did it acquire for her; what ports did it open to her manufactures; or what security has it given for the integrity of her constitution? Perhaps she may even yet make use of her illustrious prisoner to retrieve some of her errors. If she should not, and South America should fail to acquire independence, she will find few of her allies, "so poor as to do her reverence." In England however, the embers of prejudice are not yet sufficiently covered by the ashes of time, to admit of her late policy being regarded in the light in which posterity will view it.

The system of policy adopted by Louis, was not entirely conformable to the hopes which his proclamations had awakened. The ample proscription of the 24th of July, which was declared to embrace the names of all whom the king had resolved to punish, was soon discovered to be too limited for the vengeance of the triumphant faction. A more extensive plan of persecution spread dismay over the kingdom, and the period which elapsed between the second invasion of the allies, and the 5th of September, 1816, has obtained the appellation of the second reign of terror in France. It is somewhat remarkable, that the prejudices of foreigners were so violent during this season of persecution, that the sufferings of the French were forgotten, and the ministerial prints in England, in particular, were filled with extravagant encomiums on the clemency and beneficence of the new government. All those who were in office at the return of Napoleon were discharged, and the places filled by men distinguished for their violent hostility to freedom. Those members of the Chamber of Peers, who had continued in office under the Emperor, were declared to have abdicated their rights; those who had not been nominated by him were made hereditary; and new ones were appointed, to secure a majority of infuriated royalists. A new Chamber of Deputies was convened; and by a crafty stratagem, a similar majority secured in it. The members of the electoral colleges, who chose the deputies, were, by the constitutions of France, appointed by primary assemblies of the people; but as Bonaparte did not like the interference of the multitude in his government, especially after his assumption of the imperial dignity, he had ordained that the

electors should hold their places for life; and in order to secure their votes more easily, had never filled up the vacancies which occurred from death. The colleges therefore did not consist of much more than half their original numbers, and the resolution was now taken of filling up the vacancies, (not by the people) but by the selection of the new prefects, who were all ultraroyalists. By the aid of this stratagem, and the presence of foreign troops, together with the terror inspired by the bands of Chouans and Vendeans, and Royalists in the south, who marched about ravaging and murdering from an excess of royal and anti-protestant zeal, a chamber of deputies was created, the majority of which was far more royal than the king himself. From this circumstance the government of France presented an anomaly in the history of nations—that of a king and his minis-ters inclining to liberality, and a popular assembly instigating them to the adoption of sanguinary and tyrannical measures. The king was so well pleased in the beginning with this odious assembly, that he called it "la chambre introuvable," an appellation; which was deemed a compliment at the time, but which will be its opprobrium as long as the spirit of liberty exists in this country. The voice of that chamber is no more to be considered as the voice of France, than that of the parliament of Richard II. (who sent down orders to the sheriffs to return the members he nominated) is to be considered the voice of England. Charles II. after his restoration, attempted to establish a standing parliament; and when that failed, he determined to seduce the members by bribery and corruption. But notwithstanding the peculiar advantages of his situation, at a time when the tide of public opinion, after having run itself out in pursuit of popular rights, was setting back again into the gulph of passive obedience, he found it impracticable to keep the current always tainted, whilst the ocean from which it flowed was unpolluted. Now Louis XVIII. is a man of much more practical sense and benevolence than Charles II. was, and there is every reason to believe, that he would never have suffered that scandalous interference in the elections, but from his critical situation, and the harassing importunities of his family.

When the "Chambre introuvable" assembled, it first swore to maintain the charter, next spoke with contemptuous scorn of it,

and then violated it, by sanguinary laws. The liberty of the press was destroyed, and the privilege of arbitrary imprisonment accorded to the government. Eighty-five cours prevotales were created, to despatch criminal business with expedition; to exercise authority at pleasure; and elude the unaccommodating conscience of a jury. It was previously imagined, that the revolutionary committees and imperial police had discovered every means of assailing the suspected; but this assembly, by an unprecedented subtlety of research, invented a law against seditious cries and writings, which punished interpretative and imaginary crimes, under the appellation of "indirect provocation." Although France groaned under the presence of 150,000 gaolers, they authorized the raising of 10,000 Swiss with extravagant pay; gave permission to ecclesiastical bodies to hold property, and but for the refusal of the royal assent, would have deprived clergymen, who had once been married, of their annuities. Notwithstanding the solemn amnesty granted by the king, and the prohibition in the charter of all inquiry into past opinions, the regicides were proscribed and exiled, and the power of taking a part of their property vested in the king. A large proportion of the Chamber were even in favour of their immediate execution, and of the exile of every man who had been in office during what they called the twenty-five years of brigandage and rebellion. Some went so far as to solicit of Louis the abolition of the charter, and the re-establishment of pure despotism. Spies and informers were scattered over France-officers were dismissed en masse, to make room for those who calumniated them; there was no legal mode of defence, and society was harrowed up and disorganized to its centre. Thousands were thus deprived of the means of subsistence, and many committed suicide to escape from misery.

In addition to these distressing circumstances, a general scarcity of provisions existed in France. Large portions of the soil had gone untilled in 1815, or had their fruits destroyed by the allies; and a general failure of the crop took place in 1816. The sun (as is reported to have happened in Rome after the death of Cæsar,) was obscured by spots on his surface, and suffered such a diminution of light and heat during the summer of 1816, as destroyed the crops in both hemispheres. Yet under all these calamities, this much calumniated nation submitted with sublime patience to its new government.

The feelings of the French are yet tremblingly alive on the particular punishments inflicted after the second restoration. It is contended that blood enough had been spilt on the field of Waterloo, and in the hunt of the French which followed that overthrow, to wash out the stain and offence of rebellion; and surely if the object of punishment be to prevent the repetition of a crime, and not to gratify the spirit of vengeance, we might conclude that the slaughter of 50,000 men,-the desolation of heart it carried home into the bosom of every family,-the devastation of France by foreign troops and domestic brigands,-the enormous contribution levied by the allies, and the temporary loss of independence, might have created sufficient terror to restrain all whom fear could hinder from rebellion. 'No proof whatever of a conspiracy to restore Napoleon, has ever been discovered; and the rebellion of the entire French nation against the Bourbons, after the violation of the charter, can scarcely be considered as very different from that abandonment: of the Stuarts, which has rendered the names of Somers, and Sunderland, and Godolphin, and Churchill, illustrious. Unhappily perhaps for justice, mankind usually judge the rectitude or criminality of statesmen from the success or failure of their enterprizes; and therefore it is probable, that if Tallard had encamped the men, who now sleep on the field of Blenheim, in Hyde Park, and had there dictated terms to England, those heroes of the British constitution, those regenerators of the world, might have suffered death for their treason. When at a later period, Washington and his little band of patriots, were scoffed at as rebels by ministerialists in the English parliament, it was justly exclaimed by some orator in reply, "Rebellion is written on the backs of the flying foe; but revolution blazes on the breastplates of the conqueror."

I

It must be admitted, I think, that there were many considerations which might have inclined the Bourbons to clemency. They had their peace to make with the nation. They might have recollected also, that executions had never given stability to any government during the whole French revolution,—that Bonaparte had been very merciful and forgiving on his return, and that there was much danger of inspiring by severity, the idea "que la perfidie est noble envers la tyrannie." As the whole nation had offended, the selecting of individuals for execution, had something odious in it, and seemed to convert criminals into martyrs. The fate of Labedoyere in particular, exoited the deepest sympathy. His wild enthusiasm and romantic valour had delighted his countrymen; and as he died to expiate their influence over him, his offence was ascribed to youth, gratitude, and the illusions of an ardent mind. For the conduct of Ney there was no such apology as youth. His treason was flagrant, but not premeditated; for he had been trained in the school of the Revolution, to consider allegiance due to France, and not to a monarch. The public did not approve his conduct; but he had obtained the appellation of the "bravest of the brave," by his indefatigable gallantry, and had saved thousands of Frenchmen in the dreadful flight from Moscow. It could scarcely have been thought necessary to prove that the government had nerve enough to shoot such men, when a million of foreign bayonets were stacked in France; but if it was, a sham execution would have answered that end; and if the individuals had been concealed in prison for some time, and then brought out, it would have electrified the people with pleasure, by showing them that the government had dared to punish, but had indulged in clemency. The extraordinary escape of Lavalette delighted the French nation, and his late pardon and permission to return to France, show that his death would have been of no service to the state. The other victims of this brilliant but unlucky rebellion were executed in the provinces; and did not therefore, with the exception perhaps of Cæsar and Constantine Fouchers, attract such universal sympathy and regret. These two young officers of Bourdeaux were twin-brothers, and were not at first proscribed, but were tried and condemned. They heard their sentence with firmness; walked to the place of execution with their arms locked in each other; refused the bandage for their eyes; gave the signal, and fell dead together. Their heroism, fraternal love, and fate, touched more hearts with compassion than with fear. The many executions too, which took place at Grenoble and Lyons, only angered the public mind, and have caused a more implacable spirit of discontent to pre-

vail in those parts than elsewhere. Louis is said to have been disinclined to this severe policy, and to have yielded in some instances with extreme reluctance to the importunities of his friends. In the case of Ney in particular, he is said to have been deeply touched by a report of his repentance, and to have shown by his hesitation in signing the death-warrant, "qu'une ame genereuse a de peine à faillir."*

The country around Toulouse, Nismes, and Marseilles, is the least civilized part of France. Thirty years of confusion have not destroyed the religious and political feuds that disgraced Languedoc, in particular, before the revolution. Gangs of high church men and ultra-royalists, animated by the spirit of persecution and revenge, collected about Nismes, to assassinate all whom their malignity or caprice pleased to consider protestants or Bonapartists. The rage which murdered Marshal Brune, at Avignon, and which spread death and despair in Marseilles, was more transient than that at Nismes, where even the king's officer, General Lagarde, was assassinated in attempting to preserve the peace. D'Argenson, the wealthiest proprietor in France, denounced these crimes in the Chamber of Deputies, but the ultra-royalists stifled his voice by a general clamour.

When more than a year had elapsed after the second restoration; when the foreign troops, with the exception of the army of occupation, were gone,-the ring-leaders of the late disaster either dead or banished, and all the posts of government filled by ultra-royalists, the king discovered that the French, instead of being appeased, were more violently hostile than ever against his government; and that a spirit of insurrection pervaded all France. The rash and furious conduct of the emigres and their friends, was evidently hurrying on the nation to a dreadful explosion, which must have occurred in the autumn of 1816, but for the good sense of the ministry. The royal ordinance of the 5th of September, which dissolved the Chamber of Deputieslaid the foundation of public credit-recommenced the reign of the law-and saved the monarchy-was the result of the influence of Mr. Decazes the minister of Police. From that day a gradual improvement has been going on in France, although it has been much retarded by excessive caution. The king was

• Corneille.

aware of the general displeasure with his government, and in making that sacrifice to public opinion, reminded the nation that the advantages of amelioration were closely connected with the dangers of innovation. For this reason, he determined to retain the old electoral colleges, but suffered his ministers to exert all the influence of government, both against the ultra-royalists and the violent constitutionalists. The chamber was again reduced to two hundred and fifty-eight members, which is certainly too small a number for a great kingdom, in which a numerous house of commons is indispensably requisite to counterbalance the weight of the crown. To the largeness of her representation, England owes the independence and wisdom of her parliament, as well as what is not, at first sight, so evident, the dispatch of business. In an assembly of one or two hundred, there is a disposition to indulge every garrulous blockhead, who chooses to harangue himself out of breath and his auditors out of patience. But in a body of five or six hundred, this indulgence becomes impossible; and, therefore, none are suffered to worry the house, by beating about after nothing. Those who cannot condense their observations, and speak to the point, soon cease to take part in the debate.

The return of the French government into the track of the charter, diffused a pacifying gladness over all parties except that of the infuriated royalists. Their antipathy to liberty is so strong, that whenever she sheds a beam upon them, it causes them to give out, as the rays of the rising sun are fabled to have caused the statue of Memnon, a sound of lamentation and regret.

LETTER XVI.

Paris, April 3d, 1820.

THE new Chamber of Deputies could not, my dear sir, from the mode and circumstances of its election be a fair and candid representation of the nation. But as the ultra royalists lost the majority in it, France began to breathe, and the people, in the language of the king, "to bear their hardships with touching resignation." The overthrow of the faction which was then panting to restore royalty to its ancient plenitude of prerogative and pageantry, caused such an immediate restoration of tranquillity that the government deemed it safe to invite the allies to diminish the army of occupation; and thirty thousand troops were accordingly withdrawn. Vaublanc, the minister of the Interiour, who was odious to the nation, was dismissed, and M. Lainé, an ardent, but not furious friend of the king, appointed to fill his place. Dubouchage and Clarke, however, still continued to interrupt the harmony of the ministerial deliberations, by their despotical habits until the summer of 1817, when they were discharged. After this change, slight differences of opinion only existed in the cabinet.

The Electoral Colleges were so notoriously corrupt, that a majority of the members elected by them heartily concurred with the liberal part of the ministry in the necessity of abolishing them. Hence originated the law of elections, which annihilated those colleges, and extended the elective franchise to every individual of thirty years of age, who paid to the state a direct contribution of 300 francs, (or \$60.) This law, although it only gave the right of voting to a hundred thousand men in a nation of thirty millions, or to one person in three hundred, was vehemently opposed, of course, by the violent monarchists, who stigmatized it as democratic, and subversive of the principles of legitimate government! These new electors were to assemble in the chief town of the *department* when summoned by the king; their presidents were appointed by him, in order to enable him to present a royal candidate for their favour; and the electors were required to deliver their votes to the president and four scrutators without public deliberation. Half the members to be elected were obliged to be residents of the electing department-all were required to be forty years of age, and to pay a direct tax of 1000 francs, (or \$200;) and agreeably to the charter, one fifth of the chamber was to be renewed annually. Now, this law was a great blessing to France, although it excluded from the privilege of voting all small proprietors of land, and limited the right to a body which must diminish in number, whilst the present testamentary laws remain in force. It also discarded a principle, that of the double election, which will, if I mistake not, be found of vital importance to the respectability of public assemblies in those nations of Europe in which an extensive suffrage is to be enjoyed. The double election prevents the necessity of canvassing with the canaille, which is often disagreeable and irksome to men of rank, and takes away any undue advantage from those cajoling and hypocritical demagogues "who seem the innocent flower, but are the serpent under it." Unhappily, all sovereigns are liable to be deluded by flattery, and the people as much as any other. The French have an idea, that by two degrees of election, the affectation of vulgar manners, and the licentious habit of drinking with the canaille for popularity, may be prevented; inasmuch as the candidates would only have to make interest with those numerous electors, who, in all probability, would be men of some education, talent, or property.

In Europe, for a long time to come, popular elections will probably be attended with some tumult and danger, because they occur so rarely. In America we have disarmed them of their terrors, by the frequency of their recurrence; and we therefore smile at the fine rhapsodies of Mr. Burke, on the evils he imagined inseparable from even triennial elections; on the "drunkenness, idleness, law suits, litigations, prosecutions, triennial frenzy, dissolution of society, interruption and ruin of industry; the rendering immortal the personal hatreds, feuds and animosities, until public morals should be vitiated, and gangrened to the vitals." Besides this gang of terrors, that great statesman fancied that the independence of elections would be destroyed by repetition, because the exhausting sluices of entertainments and feasts, and bribery, would wash away and ruin private fortunes. He never seems to have reflected, that the price of all articles is diminished by their multiplication; and he therefore concluded, that because septennial elections (forty years ago,) cost on an average 3000 pounds a member, that triennial ones would be more expensive. Now, is it not astonishing that so great a genius should not have perceived, that the evils he deprecates, are actually sugmented in even a geometrical proportion by the increased duration of parliaments? His exception of Ireland does not prevent the experience of ages from corroborating this fact; for, when were elections made for life without bloodshed or corruption? I do not know on what ground he fancied that the Romans elected away their liberty; for surely there was some contrast between the sober appointment of their consuls, and the sanguinary elevation of their emperors; and I might ask, what resemblance does the almost unimaginable tranquillity with which we put up and take down Presidents, in the United States, bear to the former factious and furious elections of the kings of Poland. Because septennial elections were disorderly and corrupt, Mr. Burke averred, that the constitution would be ruined by five triennial ones. "We all know," said he, "that the candidate, instead of trusting at his election to the testimony of his behaviour in parliament, must bring the testimony of a large sum of money, the capacity of liberal expense in entertainments, the power of serving and obliging the rulers of corporations, or winning over the popular leaders of political clubs and neighbourhoods. It is ten thousand times more necessary to show himself a man of power than a man of Now it appears to me self-evident, that a man will integrity." make a much more violent effort to obtain that which he will have but two or three chances of contending for in the course of his life, than for that which he has frequent opportunities of acquiring. He forgets economy on such an occasion, and plays deep from desperation; but when he is aware that if he lose today he may succeed to-morrow, his apprehension and anxiety are alleviated by hope. Besides, when a political right is exercised so seldom by the people, it comes to be regarded as a

sort of inherited property, in the sale of which every one should profit to the best of his ability. Many too, who would accept of large bribes, would spurn at small ones.

It was not my object in this digression to combat principles of government which prevail in Great Britain, but to show the inexpediency of their adoption in France.. The constitution of England is not so much a constitution of choice, as of prescrip-It has had an infinite number of wise and good principles tion. incorporated into it by accident; it suits very well the temper and social habitudes of the nation, and has enabled it to attain an unparalleled pitch of prosperity; for which reason alone none of its principles should be hastily condemned. Perhaps, however, its age makes it reluctant to keep pace with the march of civilization; and hence, notwithstanding, its long, happy, and harmonious operation, some of its parts may be out of repair, or become too clumsy for the simplicity of modern improvement; so that unless those rotten wheels be removed in time, they may bring down the whole machine with a terrible crash.

In addition to this law of elections, which was a rough key to the Temple of Liberty, the ministry succeeded in substituting a law of recruitment for the Conscription. They used, with great moderation also, the arbitrary powers which were entrusted to them; and therefore, unless what lord Bolingbroke says be true, that slavery and tyranny do not so much consist in the stripes that are given and received, as in the power of giving them at pleasure, and the necessity of receiving them whenever and for whatever they are inflicted, the French were almost exempt from tyranny during 1817 and '18. They would have been quite so, if the men of reaction, the political recusants to. the constitutional regime, had not filled all the minor offices, and thus had it in their power to counteract the benevolence of the king, by representing transactions of the most harmless nature as combinations and conspiracies against the public weal. The searching vigilance, however, of the minister of police, M. Decazes, at last discovered these frauds, and put a stop to them. The district around Lyons was that which suffered most from these iniquitous misrepresentations. The magistrates were pleased to assert that there existed a vast plot for the overthrow of legitimacy, and the delivery of France to massacre

and plunder. Persecutions first inflamed the passions of the disaffected, and want, insult and injustice, finally provoked the peasants of some villages into acts of folly. These served, in turn, as pretexts for fresh severity.

The prisons were filled with suspected persons; the prevotal courts were kept in constant employment; arraignments and condemnations followed without number, and orders for executions were even sent by telegraph. Troops of spies were organized by the magistrates, and authorized to circulate in every. drinking house; to abuse the government, to threaten its overthrow, to invite to rebellion, to announce a general conspiracy, headed by the first men in the country, and if they succeeded in inveigling any poor wretch into a syllable of applause, to point him out to the arresting officers, who lodged him in a dungeon. These agents were so numerous that they did not know one another, and consequently shared sometimes, for a day or two, the misery they designed for their victims. The vilest soldiers were let loose on the communes to plunder and insult particular persons: to prefer accusations against them, or to insult women and children, even whilst their husbands and parents were leading to execution. Nothing of a like nature had occurred under the much vilified reign of Napoleon, although he had been exposed to domestic insurrection, and to foreign war.

The magistrates at last worked themselves up to a pitch of madness, and represented to the government that the Eastern departments were preparing for a dreadful revolt. The alarm and anxiety which their execrable bulletins excited, induced the King to send Marechal Marmont to ascertain the truth; and the report of his Aid-de-camp makes the heart shudder with horror. "La ville de Lyons et les communes qui l'entourent avaient vu renaitre pour elles le règime de 1793," &c. When Marmont reached Lyons, he found the magistrates well prepared with a thousand proofs of conspiracy, well distilled in their passage through the alembick of espionage. It was almost impossible for him to refuse his conviction of the truth of their statements, until he had extended his inquiries among respectable citizens, and the bloody records of the prevotal courts. In a moment afterwards, his doubts were removed, and he returned a report to the ministry of a scene of guilt which made the king shudder. The work of death and persecution was instantly suspended by the Marechal. Louis dispatched his mercy to all the unfortunate beings yet alive—and peace and tranquillity immediately followed Such is the nature of arbitrary government—it strikes in the dark, and its victims are called traitors.

The mayor of Lyons at that time was, I believe, the Comte de Fargues, one of those humble servants of events, as Cardinal de Retz calls them, who are willing to serve any government provided it be despotic. A few of his actions show how little reliance is to be placed on the professions of violent demagogues. When Napoleon landed from Elba, he issued a proclamation denouncing the usurper who was come "in violation of his oaths, with a lew deserters, the dregs of nations," to interrupt the delicious happiness the French were enjoying under the holy shield of legitimacy. The next week this furious royalist awoke, and behold, he was an imperialist! Then came a proclamation, announcing with transports of joy, the arrival of the Emperor at Lyons-the city, whose ruins he had removed; whose edifices he had rebuilt; whose arts and commerce he had protected, and in which it was impossible to step without discovering a monument of his munificence. "It is he," continues the proclamation, "who rescued us from anarchy, and carried the French name to the acme of renown; who is as great in legislation, as he is sublime in war, and who watches with the same parental solicitude over our interests in the field of battle, as in the closets of his palace." He remained in office under Napoleon, and was exerting himself with activity in his service, when lo! the news of the battle of Waterloo came, and then "consideration, like an angel, whipt the offending Adam out of him." His subsequent zeal for the Bourbons, and his secret manœuvring, whilst the scales of fortune were suspended, entitled him to be continued in office, and to be chosen a member of the Chambre introuvable, where he voted with the Ultras till they carried France to the brink of ruin. After the dissolution of that body, he took a lead in the horrid persecutions of 1817, and enjoyed the dignity of mayor, of Lyons till his death! Crime and punishment, under regal governments, are not always consecutive. For issuing a proclamation in favor of the Emperor, by Ney's orders, four days after

The discoveries of Marmont proved to the king the danger of listening to the vindictive resentments of the ultra royalist party, who were very naturally the haters of innovation and liberty. They had inherited the right of oppressing the people from their ancestors, and were therefore blind to its injustice; and the abolition of their privileges had not only ruined them, but had covered their country, for a time, with confusion and blood. "L'oppression est toujours la vengeance qui attend l'oppression," and it is not surprising, that they who had been dreadfully punished by revolt, should be dreadfully afraid of it, and disposed to punish it, as it had punished them.

The superior advantages of justice and clemency above rigour and persecution, in preserving internal tranquillity, manifested themselves very clearly in France after the discomfiture of those who had predicted that the state would be ruined by lenity. The appointment of Gouvion St. Cyr, as minister of war, in 1817, pleased the military; and in the first fair election, (Septemper 1817,) the nation testified its gratitude for the king's change of policy. The new members were, for the most part, men satisfied with the ministry, and disposed to await with patience the repeal of the laws infringing the charter, and the passage of such acts as would place the institutions of the kingdom in harmony with it. Under the auspices of this lenient policy, the government began to settle down more firmly, and public credit to improve, whilst agriculture, commerce and manufactures, began to extend themselves and to flourish. Indeed, the aspect of France became so cheering and complacent under these circumstances, that a general impression began to prevail, that the allied army would be removed at the end of the third year of occupation, 1818. Some dissatisfaction, however, with the ministry, for postponing the abolition of the arbitrary laws, was then beginning to be felt in France, and to disturb the public serenity. It had some influence on the election of the 2d fifth of the Chamber of Deputies, which took place just before the meeting of the Congress of Aix la Chapelle, and which raised into that body several individuals distinguished for a warmer zeal for rational liberty, than the ministry were disposed to approve. One of the causes of this, was the precarious state of the king's health, the despotical dispositions of his brother, and a silly and ridiculous conspiracy hatched by a handful of crazy monarchists, for the seizure and deposition of Louis, in a hunt at Rambouillet, and the substitution of the Comte D'Artois in his place, in order to re-establish the old regime.

The resolution of the Congress of Aix la Chapelle, to remove the foreign troops from France in the autumn of 1818, diffused a transport of joy through the nation. The conduct of the Duke of Wellington at that Congress, as well as in the settlement of the claims of the allies against France, was entitled to the highest praise; for he did not hesitate to advise the removal of the army, although it deprived him of the proudest military command on earth, and checked his love of pleasure by removing him from this metropolis of enchantment. I shall never forget the feeling with which his noble disinterestedness caused me to look at him at the magnificent sham-battle which he gave for the entertainment of the sovereigns on that occasion. It was on one of the most beautiful days that ever shone on those plains of Flanders, which seem to have been created almost for the display of armies, and it was the last time that the troops of confederated Europe and Russian Asia, were destined to meet on the same field in amity together.

Prior to the Congress of Aix la Chapelle, an impression had prevailed that the conquest of France, and the treaties of Vienna and Paris, had arranged a permanent system for Europe, and consolidated all the old despotisms. The legitimates had bien called on, it is true, to fulfil their promises to give liberal constitutions to their subjects for expelling the French, but the engagements had been easily evaded. The spirit of liberty a d independence, however, was now becoming a little refracto y under the postponement, and reciprocal communications at the Congress excited an alarm among the sovereigns. The advantages which France in particular, had derived from the revolution, and the impulse which the abolition of each arbitrary privilege had given to her civilization, excited their surprise; and it became a question how far it was prudent for them to allow

France to receive the ameliorations in her social and political condition, which institutions in harmony with the charter, might produce. They were not pleased to perceive a growing disposition in the conterminous nations to regard the consequences in preference to the calamities of the French revolution, and began to apprehend the impossibility of keeping the large advantages of the former out of view. Even the Duc de Richelieu himself, who exerted a noble activity in recovering the independence of his country, felt alarmed at the failure of his efforts to control the late elections. Nature had designed him for a liberal politician, but he had never resided in any country which presented a fair spectacle of the ennobling results of freedom, and the atrocious scenes of the revolution made him dread extravagantly all encroachments on the royal prerogative. He did not wish the restoration of the old regime, but as near an approximation to it as the improved state of France admitted. For this reason, he rather strengthened the apprehensions of the allies, by admitting that the existing law of elections in France . might bring into power men more liberal than it suited the views of the sovereigns to encourage. A scheme was consequently concerted to prevail on Louis to consent to change that law, and with a view of reconciling him to it, the Grand Despot of the North and the King of Prussia made a short visit to Paris. Yet the project created a violent division in the ministry, which all the efforts of the king could never heal, and which has led to the most important consequences.

The political parties in this country are frequently designated by the seats they occupy in the Chambers of the Deputies; which is a semi-circular hall, with benches rising one above another, like the seats of an amphitheatre. The President's chair is nearly in the centre of the diameter which cuts the circle, and immediately before it, fronted by a sort of parapet, is the elevated platform, called the Tribune, so that the orator, in speaking, (contrary to our practice,) turns his back on the president. The benches at the extremity of the semi-circle, on the president's right hand, are occupied by those strenuous supporters of absolute monarchy, who consider every privilege gained by the nation as an usurpation on the royal prerogative, and who are therefore indiscriminately called the ultra-royalist

b.

٠,

и.

a

0

ťÌ

an

lu.

ri-

nd

w

party, or the Cóté droit. The benches opposite to these, on the left of the throne, are occupied by those ardent admiters of liberty, who remember with indignation the numberless evils which arbitrary power has inflicted on France; who look with a jealous eye on the immense preregatives of the crown, and who are therefore called the liberal party, or *Cóte Gauche*. The intervening benches, in front of the President's seat, are filled by the moderate men of each party; by the tools and officers of government; and by those whiffling weathercock politicians, who always march under the flag of the powers that be; and which body has therefore obtained the name of the ministerial party, or *Le Centre.**

Now the liberal party had been very considerably reinforced by the elections of 1818; and a doubt arose, before the meetof the Chambers, whether the government could safely calculate on finding a majority to sanction any retrograde movement from the liberal position it had occupied since the preceding year. Doubts of the expediency of this policy, as well as of the possibility of pursuing it, had created the division, to which I have already alluded, in the Cabinet. This diversity of opinion had prevented the ministry from fixing on any scheme of measures, so that when the Chambers assembled, and their mutual congratulations on the recovery of the national independence were over, it was discovered that the government was entirely unprepared for their reception. The necessity of unanimity in the ministry was a flattering evidence of the idea of responsibility which its members began to attach, for the first time in France, to their respective offices; and this impression, in its turn, satisfied the king that it would be impossible for a body of men, in whom such discordance of sentiment prevailed, to hold together without a reconciliation effected by mutual concession. The breach, however, instead of closing, grew wider and wider every day, till the knowledge of it extended beyond the precincts of the court. It was at first whispered about, and then very generally announced, (though the newspapers dared not mention it.) that a change of administration must take place, since it was understood that the Duc de Richelieu, M. Lainé, Comte Molé, and perhaps Roy and Pasquier, were in favour of securing a

* Since the above was written, the ultra-royalists have got into power.

majority by a partial coalition with the ultras; while Decazes and Gouvion St. Cyr, were disposed to lean on the liberal side of the house. This division became, in the end, so violent, that during the last eight or ten days of December, the court was convulsed by it. The king, from personal affection for Mr. Decazes; from the recollection of the tranquillity which his measures had restored to France, and the evident justice of his more liberal views, was inclined to concur with him. But the clamour of his old friends, the importunity of his family, and the wishes of his allies, weighed heavily in favour of the Duc de Richelieu. It was consequently given out at court, in order to feel the pulse of the Chambers, that the former gentleman was about to be sent into honourable exile, as ambassador to the Court of St. Petersburg. During this period of anxious suspense, whilst joy and triumph were sparkling in some of the gilded saloons of the Faubourg St. Germains, where the royalists "par excellence" chiefly reside, a general alarm and inquietude prevailed throughout Paris and the kingdom; the Chamber of Deputies exhibited evident signs of consternation; the public stocks continued to ' fall with ruinous rapidity; commerce was suspended; and the national mind seemed to be working itself up to a pitch of dangerous excitement. A number of public functionaries, distinguished for their attachment to constitutional doctrines sent in their resignations; and such seemed to be the general sentiment of the instability of the proposed ministry, that many were disposed to repeat the facetious remark of Mr. Sheridan, when Mr. Addington was endeavouring to form his aurelian administration: "I have not been out for the last twenty-four hours except in a carriage-I am afraid of the press of ministers."

The city of Paris really exhibited a most curious spectacle during this period of suspense. The Caffes were filled at an early hour every morning by a bustling multitude, eagerly inquisitive after news—the boulevards, bourse, and public gardens were full of little groups with anxious countenances; and yet a stranger might have concluded, from the silence of the newspapers, that not the slightest agitation existed in Paris. The throne, however, in spite of its elevation, felt the wave of public opinion, and from the heaviness of the jar, they conjectured the depth of the profound from which it issued. On the morning of

•

the 29th, therefore, the clouds of inquietude and alarm broke up-the Moniteur announced, that the health of the Duc de Richelieu had become suddenly so delicate, as to require a journey to the south for its recovery; and that his majesty had been consequently obliged to accept his resignation, and organize a new ministry. The Marquis Dessolles, who was highly esteemed for his gallantry and integrity; who had been, as commander of the National Guard of Paris, eminently zealous for the restoration, and who had been since distinguished for liberality, was announced as President of the Council. The ministry of the Police was incorporated into that of the Interior for Mr. Decazes. Marechal St. Cyr, who was popular in the army and nation, was continued as Minister of War; M. Louis, a friend to the Charter, and a good financier, took the place of M. Roy; and M. de Serre, a man of brilliant parts, and a member of a small liberal junta, called "les doctrinaires," from their peculiar tenets, became Keeper of the Seals; and M. Portal, Minister of Marine. A spontaneous burst of gratitude and joy, which was the more lively from the previous despondency of the public mind, followed the appointment of this ministry; for it was considered the triumph of free principles over feudal prejudices, and the wedge which would separate constitutional France from despotic Europe.

LETTER XVII.

Paris, April 5th, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

The liberal party in this country considered the departure of the allied army as the liberation, and the appointment of the new ministry as the emancipation, of France. Their expectations, however, were raised too high by this sudden triumph. The seeds of disappointment were sown by the sanguine extravagance of their hopes, and the eager precipitancy of their de-They seem to have imagined that the golden scales of mands. Astrea were about to descend, and fix permanently in the realm of France. They neither reflected on the difficulty with which the triumph had been achieved, nor on the previous reserve and hesitating liberality of the king; nor on the innumerable difficulties which the first really constitutional ministry must inevitably encounter in its march. In an honest conviction of the necessity of certain guarantees to liberty, which they regarded as the consequences flowing from the charter, they immediately ran on in imagination to the accomplishment of a system of free government, without ever apprehending, that the hurry with which they pressed their measures might embarrass the ministry, and alarm the cautious reluctance with which the king yielded to ameliorations. Their writers therefore contended for the prompt repeal of all laws violating the charter; for the substitution of the legal responsibility of authors and printers, in lieu of the censorship of the press; for the establishment of the independence of juries, which are now selected by an officer of the crown; for the clear responsibility of ministers and the inferior agents of government; for a re-organization of the municipal system of the kingdom, that might give to the towns, villages and communes, the right of appointing their own mayors, (which officers, 44,000 in number, are now appointed by the

government to the great detriment of the local interests;) for a re-organization of the national guard, so as to exempt private citizens from martial law; for the creation of an act for the security of persons, similar to the English act of Habeas Corpus: and for the revision of the penal code of the imperial regime, which was deemed infinitely too tyrannical for a representative monarchy.

This concise enumeration of French grievances may enable you to see that this nation has lived, even in the interval of greatest relief since the restoration, under the weight of many heavy and vexatious institutions, which were created by despotism and have survived its overthrow. The political surface of France is therefore, in spite of the charter, an intaglio on which the figures and forms of despotism remain. The liberals were impatient to get rid of these, and remembered Lord Bacon's suggestion in speaking of science; that "men may be assured, that a fond opinion they have already acquired enough, is a principal reason why they have acquired so little;" and also that the sharp arraignment of the imperfections of existing things is much more serviceable to a state, than a diffusive harangue of praise and gratulation.

But although the new ministry were not able to keep pace with the swiftness with which public opinion swept on to improvement, it commenced a system of moderate reform, highly honourable to its patriotism and philantbropy. It created two commissions for the improvement of agriculture, and for the encouragement of national industry, to the consequences of which I may call your attention hereafter. It next prevailed on the king to extend his mercy to some of those unfortunate beings who had fallen under the ban of royal displeasure after the troubles of the hundred days. General Radet was released from confinement, and General Travot, who had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment, was likewise set at liberty; but unhappily, the afflictions of confinement had destroyed his reason. General Allix, an officer of high merit, distinguished alike for his attainments in science, and his gallantry in arms; and General Excelmans, with whose renown you are familiar, were also restored to their families and homes.

The ministers next brought forward in the chambers a project of a law for the responsibility of ministers; which, notwithstanding the charter, was yet a great desideratum in the constitutional regime of France; for no monarchy in which the infallibility of the crown is not admitted, can be a tolerable form of government. The principle, therefore, that the king can do no wrong, is, (in spite of its paradoxical appearance, and the scorn with which ignorant misinterpreters deride it) the fundamental basis of liberty in a monarchy; for it amounts to the assertion that the king can do nothing at all by himself; but that all the acts of his government are the deeds of responsible agents. The experience of all ages proves, that the legal responsibility of a sovereign is a mere shadow; since it is always in his power to set any punishment at defiance, save that which results from the precarious desperation of an assassin, or the terrible vengeance of successful rebellion. With the treasures of the state, and a standing army at his disposal, there is scarcely any atro-, city that he may not perpetrate with impunity. The constitution should therefore raise the throne above the region of storms; it should be the mere ornamental and consolidating key-stone of the arch of state, which supports nothing, but which crowns the whole, and is supported by it. The king should be inviolable, because he is intangible. The minister, who plans and executes a measure, should be answerable for its consequences, because he may be touched without endangering the public tranquillity. When the minister is thus the real king, monarchy is deprived of its sting, and converted into a commonwealth. I am aware that prejudice imagines this restraint incompatible with the dignity of a true monarch; but . common sense knows it to be reciprocally advantageous to king and subject. It is a security to each; for the king is always at liberty to do what is right; nor will he ever lack ministers to execute just orders; and if he be inclined to do wrong; although he might find no courtier honest enough to tell him so, he will see it. in the fears of his minister.

I by no means intend to bestow an unqualified eulogium on the law of responsibility which that ministry proposed, for it was evidently inadequate to its object, and of so vague and loose a contexture, that it would have been infinitely difficult to pun-

ish a minister under it, for any crime sanctioned by the crown. But the very recognition of the principle set forth in the charter was a salutary event, calculated to extend the comprehension of the nature of just government; and whenever this might be clearly understood, the defects of that law, (the shelter which it afforded to the inferior officers of state, and the screens it held out to cover ministerial obliquity,) could have been easily re-In truth, however, no law of ministerial responsibility moved. can be otherwise than illusive in France, whilst the government retains the present establishment of conseillers d'etat,* a sort of ministry behind the curtain, which eludes the hands of the law by invisibility. It is a tribunal of administration composed of judges, removable at will, in whose decrees the nation finds not even the security of publicity; whose powers are limited by no law, and whose increase of numbers is checked by no boundary, save the inability of the treasury. It is an excellent asylum to pension sycophants, and put discarded ministers on half pay. But whilst such pernicious institutions of despotism exist under a constitutional government, the abyss of revolution can never be closed.

Some apology for the slow and embarrassed proceedings of the ministry of 1819, may be found in the dispositions of the Chamber of Peers, a majority of which was in opposition to the government, and willing at any cost to impede its constitutional march. Now, surely, in a country in which the foundations of Aristocracy had been broken up, and in which the political privileges of the Peers rested, neither on the solid basis of antiquity, nor of public affection, nothing could have been more rash and ill advised, than for the upper house to make an ungenerous effort to curtail and break down the independence of the commons. Such an attempt, which would have been invidious in any country, was disastrous in France, where it tended to smother the embryo of esteem which the Lords were beginning to acquire, and revived the old idea, that there was a natural and inevitable opposition of interest between the nobility and the people. Yet, notwithstanding these considerations, the Chamber of Peers, forgetting its loyalty and its interests, had the temerity to propose a change in the law of elections. By a very

* See Les Constitutions, par Lanjuinais,

cunning stratagem, the ultras who instigated this measure, prevailed on the Marquis Barthelemi, a new man, to bring it forward, and thus sheltered themselves from the odium of offending the wishes of the King, and the desires of the nation. The Marquis is a man, who, after having floated with complacency on the tide of every government, had acquired the reputation of inoffensive honesty, but had reached that age at which physical debility sometimes impairs the faculties of the mind. He had been in succession a Secretary of Choiseul, an agent of Louis XVI., an Ambassador of the Convention, a Director of the Republic, a Comte and Senator of the Empire; and finally, a Marquis and Peer of the Kingdom.

All France was in repose when the torch of discord was thus uselessly lighted by a faction, that seemed resolved, like Nemesis, when she could no longer wound by the javelin in her right hand, to disturb the public quiet by reflecting black images from the mirror in her left. The mere suggestion of this change placed the government in the most embarrassing predicament, and filled the nation with alarm. This attack on the only guarantee of the rights and liberties of the nation, had been so clandestinely resolved on in the political conclave, that the ministry had no 'apprehension of it; so that not a member of the Cabinet was present when it was made. A messenger instantly summoned Mr. Decazes to the Luxembourg, and he combatted the motion with ingenuity and eloquence. But although he denounced it as the most fatal suggestion that ever sprung from the breast of that assembly; as a question which threw the new · interests of the kingdom into jeopardy; which endangered every right, and shook the foundations of every fortune in the kingdom, the majority of the Chamber voted to receive the proposition.

The law of elections was dear to the French, because it was the only practical result of the charter; and because they felt that if the choice of deputies were once placed in the hands of the crown and noblesse, that France would soon present a political solecism—a nation living in servitude under a free charter.* Nor could they doubt that the next attempt would be to reconcile the constitutional declaration of equality of rights with feudal privileges and tythes—liberty of education with instruction

* Such she has since become under the present ultra ministry, (1822.)

in the hands of the Jesuits---religious freedom with the inquisition, and personal liberty with the Bastile.

The alleged reason for the change was one of those ingenious sophisms which are always at hand to excuse the encroachments of tyranny, and which deserves to be remembered as an instance of the facility with which the most sinister design may assume the semblance of justice. It was contended, that as every man, who paid a direct contribution of 300 francs, was entitled to a vote, and that as two thirds of the electors were those paying from 300 to 700 francs, that therefore all the members were chosen by these, whilst the other third, who paid above 700, elected none at all! This modest assumption of an innate opposition of opinion between the larger and the smaller contributors-this paltry, flimsy, miserable web of sophistry, was spread out with such dexterity, that many an honest simpleton was entangled in it, and some, in their perplexity, thought it justified an attempt to force the nation to an abdication of its rights. In America, where we are not fond of the curve line of grace in political argument-where we march up straight to the question, and enter the breach at the point of the bayonet of common sense, it is very difficult, I know-nay, almost impossible, to conceive the round-about way in which they discuss matters of state in this country.

During the agitation of this question in the House of Peers, the public funds continued to fall; bankruptcies multiplied; commerce declined; fear and trembling shook the body politic, and a multitude of petitions against the change flocked in from every quarter of the kingdom. Happy, indeed, might it have been for . the stability of this throne, for the tranquillity of France, and for the consolidation of a constitutional system in the South of Europe, if the Deputies had manifested an equally perverse disnosition, and had thus obliged the ministry to dissolve the Chamber, and augment its members. A free election at that time when the tide of royal and ministerial opinion was running in a constitutional channel, would have elected a Chamber of Deputies with opinions in harmony with the body of the nation, and whose exertions might have closed up for ever the passages leading back to an arbitrary regime. But destiny decreed it otherwise, and France is fated to plunge and flounce about for

some time longer in a sea of troubles. I would not be understood as approving the penal dissolution of an assembly in any but a deplorable exigency. Every act which tends to create the dependence of one branch of government on another, is to be deprecated; and the day may come when Mr. Pitt's dissolution of Parliament in 1784 may be regretted as a dangerous innovation in England.

When the French ministers discovered that the majority of the Upper Chamber were against them, they resolved on a very violent measure, the creation of sixty peers in a day. The emergency was great I admit, but the measure way ingerous as a precedent. The restoration of the members which ad been set aside in 1815, would have been an act of salutary justice; for it is a just remark of Bolingbroke, that if the crown could unmake, as well as make Peers, "it would be a jest to talk of three estates, since there would be virtually and in effect but two; and therefore our constitution provided against it." But this inspiration of wisdom was wanting in France. The government, instead of reinstating the dispossessed peers, created anew such of them as it restored, and by thus recognizing the power of elimination in the crown, sapped the foundations of the independence of the Chamber.

Among those who were raised to the peerage on that day, were some whose deeds brighten the history of France; some whose private virtues render them dear to the nation; and some whose historical names are an essential appendage to the throne of the Bourbons. Among them was Moncey, the oldest and poorest of the French Mar has. Such is the integrity of this man's reputation, that it is said that Joseph Bonaparte, in speaking of him to his brother, remarked that he was the only one of Napoleon's Marechals who could travel in Spain without a He had been condemned to three month's imprisonment guard. by the royal government in 1815, for refusing to sit on Ney's trial, and had lost all standing at court for a letter to the king, which would have rendered even a Roman illustrious. There were also promoted at that time, Les Marechals Suchet, Lefebvre, Davoust, Jourdan, and Mortier-generals Claparede, Rapp, Reille, Rampon, Dijeon, and Sparre-Chaptal, Cadore, Cornu det, Daru, Lacepede, Mounier, Mollien, Portalis, Montesquieu

and St. Simon. This bold and vigorous measure by which Mr. Decazes overthrew the liberticide scheme of demolition, not only disconcerted the projects of the ultras, and invigorated the hopes of the liberals, but was followed by very salutary effects on the affairs of the nation. It restored buoyancy to public credit, and gave an air of stability to public institutions. It reconciled liberty to power, and in spite of the hootings of the partizans of prerogative, it opened the national heart, and filled it with gratitude and rejoicing.*

1

When monfidence and repose were thus happily restored, the ministry selt itself at liberty to pursue with enlightened caution the plan of moderate and rational reform, by which it meant to place the institutions of France in harmony with the principles of the charter. But the tortuous and irregular policy of preceding administrations had accumulated many difficulties in their way, and not the least of their restraints, perhaps, was the exceeding wariness of the king, who influenced by the recollection of the vicissitudes of his own fortunes, and by the memory of the many great events he had seen arise from trivial changes, could not be induced to step but with excessive caution. The restless and implacable hostility too, of the king's personal friends to his ministers, kept his suspicions of the danger of innovation perpetually awake. The cabinet, therefore, afraid of alarming the jealous prejudices of the monarch, and still anxious to incline their policy to the views of the liberals, whose impatience would scarcely brook an adjournment of justice, were obliged to assume a sort of mysterious inertness, that gratified their enemies and disappointed their friends. The former snarled at their embarrassment, and the latter clamoured at their delay, until their very reticence was charged on them as an evidence of their incapacity or their heresy. At last, however, in the month of April a law was proposed for the emancipation of the press, or rather for the substitution of certain pains and penalties for its abuses, in lieu of the previous censorship. This law did not

* Nine of the dissoized Peers were not included, and among these were M. De Segur, one of the most brilliant writers and statesmen in France,—the Duc de Praslin—Dagier, a venerable old man, who devotes a large portion of his fortune to the erection and support of provincial hospitals—Fabre, an able financier, and generals Gassendi and Valence. entirely satisfy the fifty or sixty liberal deputies, and must be admitted to have contained cramps enough to have made it intolerable in a free country; but it was a noble acquisition in France, and one, which if it had been maintained would have enlarged the political capacity of this nation, and given it in a short time a just conception of the excellency of free government. It transferred the cognizance of the offences of the press from the hands of the correctional police into those of a court or jury, and would have been for this reason alone a great conquest, since punishment by law is regular and therefore, however severe, is fair; but punishment by an arbitrary police is uncertain or capricious, and therefore unjust. That law held the editor responsible for all he published, even though the author's name were attached to the publication! It required an editor to deposit, as a security for his good conduct, ten thousand frances de rentes-suppressed a paper during the arraignment of its editor-required a signed copy to be delivered to the prefect or mayor before publication-compelled the editor to publish any ordinance or report of the government when required, and in defining libels went so far as to declare, that all allegations or imputations whatever that went to disparage "the honour or the consideration" of a man, were defamation!

M. de Serre, the keeper of the seals, a man of high feelings and impetuous imagination, recommended this law with an eloquence that heightened the reputation he had already acquired, by the vehement harangue in which he vindicated the law of elections. If the bill was not as generous as patriotism might have desired, the effulgent liberality of the minister's speech compensated for its defects, and promised such a gradual enlargement of the freedom of the press, as delighted the French In spite of all the bad regimes that have jaded and oppeople. pressed this nation, it still knows that it is as necessary for an unjust government to censorize the press, as it is for a highway.* man to gag the traveller he means to plunder. The minister, therefore, who proclaims his fearlessness of the press gives a strong indication of the integrity of his views, and if believed, never fails to be esteemed by the public.

Soon after that speech, however, M. de Serre, who had hitherto supported with such beautiful vehemence the cause of reform,

experienced some personal contrarieties that considerably abated the ardour of his zeal, and estranged him from liberal doctrines. It was imagined by some that the popularity he acquired by that brilliant discourse alarmed the jealous ambition of M. Decazes, who being desirous of singular distinction himself, was impatient at the appearance of any rival that might jostle or elbow him out of the road to pre-eminence; and who, therefore, intrigued so adroitly through the king, as to induce M. de Serre to utter some illiberal sentiments that overthrew his popularity. But subsequent circumstances have not entirely verified this conjecture. I should rather suspect his alienation from the liberal party, with which he had nearly become identified, although it might have commenced in that way, was actually produced by a concurrence of disastrous accidents, that fretted and provoked a temper rather too susceptible of excitement. He was connected with the Swiss troops and of course fond of them. To these the Liberals had an invincible antipathy. They deprecated as an act of flagrant injustice the employment of foreigners with extraordinary pay, when old French soldiers were condemned by poverty to the thrashing of corn in granaries and the pounding of stones on the highways.* A rancorous antipathy between the French and Swiss, which arose from this cause, had been inflamed by private quarrels until at last blood had been shed on both sides. The Swiss officers without inquiring into the merits of the case made a violent demand for the prompt punishment of the French. and on the other hand, many of the departments sent up petitions to the Chamber of Deputies praying for the removal of the Swiss regiments. The Liberals hailed these petitions with zealous indiscretion;-for whatever may have been the justice on their side, they should have made some allowance for the private prejudices, and, perhaps, unavowable apprehensions of the royal family, and might have anticipated the sinister interpretation that would be given at court to their eager intercession on this subject. I do not know that we can expect it of any party to act with prudence on every occasion, but those, who are deliberately aiming at the attainment of an uncertain object, should remember that an invading force sometimes serves the purposes

See Etienne's Letters.

of its adversaries by marching too rapidly, as in the games of the Promethean fable, the torch as frequently went out from the fleetness, as from the sluggishness of the courser's motion. You will observe in time however the sad consequences of that improvident impatience.

Another circumstance contributed to exasperate M. de Serre, and to prevent his matriculation into the Côté Gauche. The liberal party had uniformly contended against the existence under the charter, of a right in the crown to punish or exile any individual, without an open investigation of his conduct, and a legal condemnation of it. This arbitrary power bowever, had been assumed by the crown after the second restoration, and the Chambre introuvable, had passed a law, expelling from France the regicides and persons most obnoxious to the ultra royalists. Now the ministry of 1819, did not hesitate to admit that this proscription was contrary to the charter, which guaranteed personal security, and oblivion of all past actions to the subject, but they contended that as the law had been carried into effect, its repeal would be a full pardon to these exiles, and that as this was repugnant to the feelings of the royal family, it was the duty of France to await quietly the relentings of the king's mercy. The Côté Gauche on the contrary conceived that as the edict was unconstitutional, it ought to be declared null and void, since to suffer its continuance would be; to sanction its principle. In the course of the debate which out of this subject, M. de Serre, who as minister of justice, might as well have been absent, let fall an unguarded suggestion, that the petitions included the Bonapartists, and that whether they did or not, the king would never consent to them. This intemperate declaration was the signal of irreconcilable war between him and the liberal party. The press immediately opened its batteries on both sides, and virulen't philippics every day widened the breach between them. The ephemeral popularity of M. de Serre was then suddenly broken down, and the jealous inquietude of M. Decazes subsided along with it, so that these two statesmen became reconciled into a very cordial union with each other. That secession was a loss of greater moment to the liberals than they at first apprehended, for no zeal is more intense than that of a neophyte from irritation. In the ensuing session of the chamber, a dozen votes became of infinite importance to the destinies of

Europe, as well as to the liberties of France, and the influence of M. de Serre, which carried half the platoon of the *Doctrinaires* into the scale of power, caused it to preponderate.

In the heat of the debate on the exiles, M. de Serre, went perhaps farther than he was warranted in his declaration of the royal implacability, for the king immediately after partly appeased the general murmur it excited, by the recal of Marechal Soult, and four or five other generals from banishment. The public would have been still more highly gratified to have seen Arnault, the author of Marius at Minturnær, also recalled, for as no treason or love of the imperial regime could be imputed to him, they ascribed his absence to an aversion in the government, from men who had consecrated their lives to the advancement of the cause of true freedom.

The liberal party urged his recall as they did every other measure with an eager intentness that shook the stability of the ministry, and induced some of its members to caution them, that if they pressed the government too hard in their demands of constitutional laws, the king would revolt from his present course, and throw the government into the hands of the oligarchy. But warnings were lost upon them. They thought the wind too high in their favour, for the government to resist it, and therefore went on with all sail set, to their ruin. The Minerva an hebdomadal paper, edited with great ability by a party of liberals, was almost as violent against the ministry, for its scanty liberality, as the Conservateur, the oracle of the ultras, was from an apprehension of its flooding France with innovations. It styled the ministry "une bigarrure d' administration," isolated in the midst of the nation, having none but pensioned creatures for its supporters, and flatterers for its counsellors-upbraided it with floating about in perpetual uncertainty; with calling to its aid to day, those it denounced vesterday; with frightening the left by the projects of the right, and terrifying the right by the projects of the left. It contended, that although the French had given up their rights at the shrine of glory, they would never submit to relinquish them for no equivalent; that all they now asked was the fair execution of the charter, which by guaranteeing all rights and protecting all existencies, would give repose and stability to government.

That there was much truth in all this, I am not at all disposed to deny; but now that the short career of this ministry is finished, it is due to candour to declare, that France has never had one surrounded with equal obstacles, that did as much in the same space of time for the amelioration of her internal condition. They urged the king as much, and pushed him as far, as his sensitive jealousy of prerogative would permit; and his hesitations alone might have obliged them to manœuvre, instead of marching boldly forward with a firm and elastic step. So long as they were obliged to retain the great mass of executive officers, brought into power by the re-action of 1815, when the decks were swept to make way for new-comers, it would have been impossible to carry into efficient operation the principles of the charter. As some diversity of opinion prevailed too in the ministry, a part of which was unwilling to proceed further, before they had well observed the effects of the present relaxation of tyranny, it was judged most expedient to adjourn the questions of the municipal organization, the national guards, the jury, penal code, &c. till after the result of the next election was known.

As a friend to rational liberty all over the world, I feel bound in expressing my admiration of the doctrines of the liberal party, to censure their conduct, for the acrimony with which they arraigned the irregular march of the government, and for the imprudence of the suspicions with which they falsified the sincerity of those ministers. I believe I have sufficiently pointed out to you already, the clogs which embarrassed the movements of these, to enable you to account for the seeming discrepancy between their opinions and policy. They did little or nothing that was wrong, and can only be said to have "left undone some things that they ought to have done." But the Liberals acted with a sort of Epimethean improvidence, before the game was in their own hands. They fixed their eyes on the stars that glittered on the mountain before them, and examined so little the way on which they were advancing, that they forgot its slipperiness; so that in attempting to stride too far, they fell back like the stone of Sysiphus, and have had their labours to begin anew.

If the revelations of time should not confirm my conjecture of the restraint in which the ministry of 1819 were held by the

court, posterity will very freely condemn their want of political wisdom. After they had begun the work of reform, they ought to have taken no holyday-no repose from their labours, until their work was done. What they had acccomplished offended one party, and what they had not accomplished, offended the other. The position in which France was placed, at the close of the Session, was false and insecure; and was actually, in its consequences, fatal to them. The charter was alleged to be the inviolable, fundamental, and even unalterable law of the state: and yet some acts, manifestly infringing it; were suffered to remain, whilst the press was set at liberty to attack them.--The election of the third series of members was approaching, and nearly all the public functionaries, whose influence was necessarily considerable in the elections, were in opposition not only to the nation, but to the government; and although the precarious tenure, by which they held their offices, might prevent their impertinent interference against the ministers, it could not prevent the secret effects of their hostility; for suppleness is no guarantee for fidelity. The body of electors, too, was angered at this continuance in office of men whom they regarded as aliens to their interests; and in spite of the conciliatory dispositions which were then beginning to prevail between the government and people, were induced, by this prominent evil alone, to distrust the intentions of the ministers. All these circumstances combined to defeat the end of ministerial manœuvering in the elections of last year, and to prevent the return of men of a ductile and acquiescent nature.

The Liberals undoubtedly imagined, that it was impossible for the government, after the dissolution of the Richelieu ministry, and the consequent failure of the attempt to change the law of elections, to recur with success to any similar experiment in future. But they contemplated their hopes more than their powers, and forgot how quickly "nature falls into revolt, when gold becomes her object." Had they been fully aware of the precarious independence of the Chambers, they might have acquiesced in the delay of the repeal of the obnoxious laws, and consented to have seen them bind France for a few months longer to the Promethean pillar of necessity, since time was forging the arrows with which the political Hercules might slay the vultures that tormented her.

LETTER XVIII.

Paris, April, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

Nothing could have been more enlivening than the prospect of prosperity which opened on France in the summer of 1819. The reins of her government were then in the hands of intelligent men, whose policy gave an universal stimulus to industry. Petty diversities of opinion as to the rapidity or extent of the reform of administration, may have given some trifling irregularity to the public pulse, but cannot be considered as having impaired the general soundness of the body politic, or lessened the hearty confidence with which this nation looked forward to the enjoyment of a long season of health and vigour. It seemed as if the bark of state, after much tossing and heaving about on the sea of revolution, was ready to cast anchor permanently in the halcyon haven of constitutional liberty. The consequences of the ameliorated political state of France,, were the rapid improvement of her manufactures, and the recovery of her commerce from the effects of the war. The season too, happened to be uncommonly propitious, and the earth brought forth a plentiful supply of corn, and wine, and fruit, of every description.

To gratify the public curiosity and vanity, the government ordered an exposition of the products of national industry; and no scene could be more brilliant than that which Paris exhibited during the months of September and October. A crowd of foreigners flocked in from every country of Europe, to enjoy the splendid exhibition; and during the first week after the opening of the Louvre, more than 20,000 English alone are said to have arrived in this capital. The disheartened vanity of the French was re-vivified by this admiration of their productions, and the press consequently teemed with extravagant encomiums on the perfection of the arts in France, and on the charms of Paris, as the metropolis of civilization, and the centre of all earthly elegance.

The change which had taken place in France since I passed through it on my way to Italy, in the autumn of 1818, was almost incredible. A new life seemed to be infused into every department of government. The liberty of the press alone had awakened such an interest in public affairs, that the mails were carried in two thirds of the time they had hitherto required. Carriages had been substituted universally for tumbril carts in their conveyance, and the journeys to Lyons and Bordeaux, which, in 1818, had required respectively one hundred and one hundred and seven hours, were now performed in sixty, and sixty seven, being at the rate of about five English miles an hour. Every occupation, in fact, felt the quickening effects of the new system, until the government began to recoil from its liberal concessions.

The prosperous condition of France would have given the ministers great influence at the annual elections, but for one or two blunders, which offended the electors, and heightened the distrust which the limping pace of the government had already excited. Among these was the impolitic and unjustifiable arrest of M. Bavoux, a professor of law, in one of the colleges of Paris. This gentleman in a lecture on the penal code of France, had expressed some strictures on the defects of one of the criminal laws. Two or three young ecclesiastics, present by design, hissed the professor, and the impertinent interruption excited a burst of indignation from the students. Some police agents seized M. Bayoux, who was hurried off to prison, on the charge of preaching insubordination to the laws. A pack of domiciliary visitors broke into his house, seized his papers, and delivered all his letters, notes and manuscripts, into the hands of M. Bellart the attorney general, who being a violent politician of the antique school commenced a prosecution. The college was closed, and some 1500 students from every part of France, turned into the streets, where whilst their feelings were highly excited, police spies in disguise were introduced among them, and the most imprudent of the young men hurried to prison. After some delay the professor was brought to trial, and the worst of his notes was discovered to be a quotation from (as well as I remember)

Delohme on the British constitution. There is less servility in France at present, than in England under Charles II., and therefore Mr. Bavoux escaped the fate of Sydney.

Another error was the encouragement of the Jesuits, and the scheme of surrendering the education of youth into the hands of the priesthood. These impolitic measures were attributed to the esurient ambition of M. Decazes, who, having hitherto succeeded in all his undertakings, was fancied to be now intriguing to acquire a fee simple tenure of the helm of government, by pleasing the Comte D'Artois. You will see in the end how he duped nobody but himself, and how the ultras, whom he meant to inveigle, ensnared him, and then cleared "his visual nerve with euphrasy and rue."—The first consequence of the resolution to put education into the hands of the clergy, (many of whom were half educated young men, who blended political fanaticism with religious bigotry,) was the resignation of Royer Collard, the director general of education, a man of fine talents, and the father of the political sect of Doctrinaires.

There were fifty-one members whose term expired in September 1819, of whom twenty-one were ultras, twenty-six ministerialists, and four liberals. Now the sentiments of the French nation may be pretty fairly collected from the characters of the new members. four of whom were ultras, eight ministerialists, and thirty-nine liberals. This result threw the oligarchy into despair, and the ministry into consternation. The first impulse of M. Decazes is said to have been to yield to this unequivocal expression of the national will, and to adopt such measures as would have produced the true eucrasy of the French constitution. But he was induced by the influence of the court, or by reflection, or by a dread of the competition of the powerful talents of the Côté Gauche, to relinquish the scheme. He was aware that he could never be the favorite statesman of the liberals, and was perhaps alarmed by the unbounded elation of this party which now boldly proclaimed, that after the election of the next fifth it would have the majority.

The late election proved one fact at least, that there were but two parties in France, the friends of a representative government and the partizans of the ancient regime. Imperialists and jacobirs, republicans and doctrinaires were all merged either into the **Party** which demanded the consolidation of a limited monarchy, or that which contended for the divine delegation of kings. As it was evident that the ministerial party, or the centre, was a factitious corps, created by the government, and no longer a majority, there was an absolute necessity for the ministry to identify themselves with the right or the left. This necessity created a division in the cabinet.—Dessoles, St. Cyr, and Louis, were in favour of a coalition with the liberals, but Decazes, De Serre, and Portal, were inclined to unite with the royalists. This opposition grew warmer as the opening of the session approached—all the cords and pulleys of intrigue were put in motion around the deputies, and the delightful tranquillity of the public mind was again disturbed, until a factious estuation was brought on in every part of the kingdom.

The liberal party had gained a great accession of talent as well as numbers, by the late election. The acquisition of General Foy alone would have been a triumph; for he is possessed of a character as fitted to excel in legislation as in war. His political sentiments are the inspirations of a high sense of honour, combined with an ardent devotion to liberty; and the style of manly and polished eloquence in which he delivers them, commands even the admiration of his opponents. But among the new appointments was one, that of the Abbé Gregoire, which was so very unfortunate in its effects, and so illustrative of the unfairness of the spirit of faction, that it is necessary to call your attention particularly to the ferment it excited.

Comte Gregoire, who is now about seventy years of age, was in early life an ecclesiastic and professor of a college. As a member of the states general, he was one of the first curates that went over to the side of the commons, and when the national assembly was formed, he became the zealous advocate of political reform and religious toleration. He protested particularly against the inhuman treatment of the Jews; against the assembly receiving a present of Palissot's edition of Voltaire, unless it had been freed from the impurities which stained the reputa-He opposed zealously the slave trade, tion of that author. which last rendered him obnoxious to the colonies; and voted for the abolition of royalty in France, because he considered the history of kings was that of the martyrdom of nations; "que toutes les dynasties n'ont été que des races devorantes, qui ne

vivait que de chair humaine." Yet he proposed the entire abolition of capital punishment in France, and that Louis XVI. should be the first to receive the benefit of that law. When that unfortunate monarch was condemned, he was absent in Savoy, but is charged with having asserted in a letter that the punishment was just During the whole revolutionary regime he had been the protector of savans, men of letters and artists. The *Bureau des longitudes* and the Conservatory of Arts and Sciences, were national establishments of his creation; and as a senator and count, which Napoleon had, (after several presenta-

tions,) made him, his sentiments were in opposition to tyranny. Such is the political character of the man against whose election a most violent clamour has been raised, as an outrage to rovalty, because he had written a letter, (in the reign of terror, when a man's life depended on a word,) approving the conduct of the Convention. His majority at the late election had arisen from the secret support of about seventy ultras who meant to take advantage of it, and "marcher au bien par l'excès du mal." His election was in fact void from the department of L'Isere, because the charter requires half the members to be residents, and because this was not the case, and he was the last on the list. But the royal cabal were not willing to exclude him on this ground. They talked of relinquishing their seats in the Chamber; denounced him as a regicide; and sought to overthrow the law of elections by the denunciation. Men who had been the obsequious parasites of Fouché and Cambaceres, not only under the imperial regime, when such sycophancy might have been decorous, but after the restoration, now felt it a stain on their honour to breathe the same air with Gregoire. You cannot imagine what a ferment and clamour this appointment, though void, was made to excite The royal family were told, it was an insult to them; and for three or four months all France was in an uproar about it.

Unhappily for the prosperity of France and the happiness of Europe, M. Decazes, who was offended by the result of the elections, countenanced this clamour. He was ambitious of ingratiating himself with the royal family, and thought himself secure of success, because the king had recently prevailed on the Duchesse d'Angouleme to hold his child in baptism. The ultras perceived the drift of his vanity, and in order to seduce him away from the liberals, began to flatter him by the prospect of a long continuance in office, if he would repeal the law of elections. They adopted the stratagem of Hippomenes; and the political dupe, dazzled by the splendour of the golden apples, turned out of his way to pick them up.

The true policy of the liberals at that time would have been to support M. Decazes; and to obtain by kindness what they sought to acquire by force. They forgot the atrocious plans of the allied monarchs, as well as the pioneering schemes of the ultras; and instead of encouraging him to assume, at that critical juncture the port of Apollo, drove him by satire into the sinuosities and wild caperings of a fawn. Thus he was induced to suffer a prosecution of M. M. Gévaudan and Simon, for having at their houses meetings of persons friendly to the liberty of the press. By an article of the penal code, not more than twenty persons have a right to assemble at particular times, if their object be "political, religious, literary, or any other," without the previous permission of the government. The object of this law had been to break up the revolutionary clubs; and nothing could have been more injudicious than to apply it to a society of gentlemen in a city in which it is customary for the owners of private hotels to receive company on a particular evening in every week.

Before the meeting of the Chambers, M. Decazes had so fully experimented the allurements of governmental favour as to ascertain the necessity of a partial coalition with one of the opposition parties. It turned out that he was not, like Pygmalion, enamoured of his own works; and therefore preferred their destruction to their embellishment. He consequently required of the cabinet to consent to change the law of elections, and modify the charter. Two of the ministers acquiesced; but Dessolles, St. Cyr, and Louis, peremptorily refused, and were immediately dismissed by the king. M. Decazes now touched the highest point of his ambition. He became president of the council, and prime minister of France. Prince Berthier's magnificent hotel was purchased for his accommodation, and his admirers did not hesitate to compare the parhelion of his glory, to the ascendant sun of William Pitt. Yet several individuals are understood to have declined entering the new cabinet, from an impression, that when dignity is purchased by apostacy, "the private station is the post of honour." The new ministers, Pasquier, Roy, and Latour Maubourg, were not ultra-royalists, but members of the Richelieu coterie, and therefore not altogether satisfactory to the valetudinary party. M. Decazes could not bring himself to unite with the fanatics; and in order to soothe the liberal party, which was also offended, he re-appointed the nine excladed peers, and recalled all the exiles, except the regicides, and some Bonapartists, among whom was Lefevre Desnouettes. Among those recalled was Lavalette, whose providential escape had been so indecorously lamented by the lovers of strong government in foreign countries.

At the opening of the session, the king congratulated the Chambers on the propitiousness of the season, and on the facility with which the laws had been every where executed. Yet, although "the public tranquillity had been no where disturbed, there was a certain vague inquietude," he said, pervading the public mind, and in order to relieve it, he proposed to modify the charter so as to save the public liberties from the dangers of licentiousness! Thus it is, that monarchical governments march in circles. ' They set the public mind in agitation by threatening the constitution, and then justify the changing the constitution by the perturbation of the public mind. The only change, however, he distinctly suggested, was the substitution of quinquennial elections of all the Deputies, instead of the annual election of one fifth; and as there was clemency in the beginning of the speech, (the recall of the exiles,) and a promise, in the end of it, to place the laws in harmony with the charter, it did not excite much alarm.

To prevent any confusion in the presence of the king, M. Grégoire did not appear at the opening of the session. On the subsequent day, when the Chamber of Deputies met to verify the powers of the new members, and his name was called, a furious cry of "no regicide" proceeded from M. Marcellus. As the Committee reported that Grégoire was not duly elected, and therefore not entitled to a seat, the Liberals wished to avoid any inquiry into his past opinions, as it was a direct violation of the 11th article of the charter, which they had all sworn to

observe. But the rage of the ultra-royalists had been so excited by the result of the elections, that they were resolved to ventilate it, and therefore Mr. Becquey, the reporter of the Committee, in announcing the illegality of M. Gregoire's election, indulged in some contumelious reflections on the unworthiness of his character The moment he was done, the ultra leaders rushed furiously up to the Tribune to vociferate the language of passion, and to insist on declaring M Grégoire, indign of a seat in the Chamber. It was in vain that the Liberals and moderate ministerialists protested against that unconstitutional proceedin,, and called for the question. The tumult became generalthe President rang his bell-the uproar increased-the house became violently convulsed-would listen to no member; yet cried M. Laine, "I will sooner be massacred than get down;" after which, the President put on his hat and adjourned the Chamber for an hour.

When it assembled again, the President, instead of limiting the discussion to the question of the legality of Gregoire's election, suffered it to range over the unconstitutional ground of expulsion for revolutionary opinions expressed in '93. All the labyrinth of jesuitical subtilty was run through, and among other monstrous sophisms, it was contended that there was a law of honour paramount to all oaths—that although a citizen be elected a Deputy, it depended on the Chamber to admit him as a representative of France; and that the king's right of calling the members by secret letters into the Chamber, was intended to prevent the admission into it of any one soiled by one of those "grandes indignités dont les lois positives rougissent de parler."

There is something respectable in misdirected enthusiasm, and therefore, in spite of its perniciousness, we admire the genuine *ultraism* of such men as Villèle and Châteaubriand-Their devotion to their king resembles the chivalrous loyalty of the darker ages; it derives its ardour from conviction, and has all the raciness of the olden time. But what excuse can be found for that racemation of placemen or ministerialists, whose natural opinions are nearly in harmony with modern civilization, but who pressed forward on this occasion, with their usual vernility to subvert the independency of the Chamber; who covered their obliquity under the paltry subterfuge that the amnesty of

٩

the charter did not include public functionaries, and that the House had an absolute right to reject any member the nation might please to elect? There is none better, perhaps, than the crazy fancy of king Lear, "that scurvy politicians seem to see the things they do not." Be this however as it may, the charter-violators triumphed. The calm and invincible reasoning of M. Courvoisièr, a very sensible ministerialist, was of no more avail than the eloquent harangues of Manuel, Mechin, and Constant.

It was painful to every friend of representative government, to hear M. Pasquier claiming for the mere majority of the Chamber, the right of rejecting a member. It was by this mode of purification that the Convention secured unanimity; first, by the proscription of twenty-two members, then of sixty-three, and afterwards by such occasional eliminations as were necessary to keep the guillotine in motion, or to fill an unoccupied birth in a prison-ship destined to empty her cargo of exiles upon the deserts of Sinnamary. The Legislature of '98 practised the same folly, and were finally expelled, en masse, by Bonaparte. It was justly said by Mr. Burke,* that "the House of Commons can never be a control on the other parts of government, unless they are controled themselves by their constituents; and unless these constituents possess some right in the choice of that House which it is not in the power of that House to take away. The power of arbitrary incapacitation, utterly perverts every other power of the House of Commons."

The angry passions which were excited by the factious proceedings of the Chamber in the case of Gregoire, was a signal for the gazettes to disinhume the past votes and opinions of his most virulent arraigners; and the scandal to which such inquiries gave rise, was brought forward as an excuse to justify the abolition of the liberty of the press. The dexterous verticity of many high politicians was most sarcastically derided. Even M. Laine was asserted to have been an officer of the regicide Directory in '95; an associate of a great regicide functionary in 1809, and of Fouché in 1815; whilst the President, Mr. Ravez, was alleged to have delivered the following address to the regieide prince Cambaceres. "Your life, my lord, has been a career

* Vol. 2d, p. 302.-London edition, 1815.

of public and private virtue, which entitles you to the gratitude of your country; and it is sweet to me, in thus addressing you, to feel my private sentiments in unison with my public duty."

Perhaps you may be disposed to ask, whether the disorderly scene I have just described is not an evidence of the unfitness of this people for representative government? To this I should reply, that it goes as far to establish this conclusion, as an iniquitous verdict of a packed jury in England would, to prove the inaptitude of the British nation for the trial by jury. The present Chamber of Deputies, although the fairest representation France has yet had, is no more, in its entierty, an actual representation of the French nation, than the majority of such a jury would be of the British people. Men, who have been hoisted into the Chamber by the obliquities of governmental intrigue, in consequence of their reverence for the divine right of kings; who have not talent to acquire any distinction there, and who rejoice in discrediting every attribute which distinguishes the Chamber from the old registering Parliament of Paris, are naturally prone to silence argument by clamour, and to excite scandalous tumults, in order to bring the assembly into contempt.

Some weeks passed away after the meeting of the Chambers, before the new ministry could organize any plan of internal policy, in support of which, they could safely calculate on securing a majority of the two Houses. Among other seducing rumours, an idea was circulated, that as soon as the government had effected the changes it desired, it would enrich the Peers by an additional donation of one hundred millions of francs. All the allurements of office, likewise, were held up to charm them, as well as the Deputies, into concurrence; and yet it was with the utmost difficulty that a liberticide majority could be secured. The difficulty which the government encountered on this occasion, (although it carefully concealed the ultimity of its pernicious schemes,) was highly honourable to the French character, and in itself, a refutation of the slanders with which the friends of "strong government" revile this noble nation.

The public disapprobation of all change which assailed the integrity of the charter, was still more unequivocally displayed Hundreds of petitions in favour of the conservation of the present state of things were sent up to the Chamber, in spite of the orders of the ministry and court to all the municipal authorities not only to discountenance them, but to declare those who signed them the perturbators of the public peace. Nothing could have exasperated more bitterly the passions of the fanatics, than the dignified moderation of these petitions in favour of the maintenance of the laws; for it was evident they looked around in vain for some disturbance to justify their proceedings. Neither the depuration of the chamber however, by the expulsion of Grégoire, nor the menaced violation of the charter, had been able to excite any disorderly riot; and the want of some pretext is conjectured to have produced the most contemptible effort to disturb the peace of this city, that was ever devised by imbecility or wickedness. I allude to the Pique who appeared in Paris during the early part of last winter, and who, according to the stories in the ga-zettes, were in the habit of wounding women in the streets, without their being able to discover by whom the wound was inflicted. Some conjectured that it was done by invisible arrows; others by small poignards in canes, and not a few pretended to fancy it the legitimate consequence of the freedom of the press! It is scarcely possible to believe, that without the connivance of such a police as exists in Paris, so many little wounds should have been given without the discovery or rather punishment of the perpetrators.

As the power of proposing laws is vested in the king alone, the chambers were kept idle, whilst the ministers were scheming a palatable election law. When the project was finally resolved on, M. de Serre was appointed by the king, to defend it and to recant his vindication of the existing law. The fates took compassion on him however, and ill health rendered it necessary for him to inhale, in the neighbourhood of Nice, the softer air of the Mediteranean. The duty next devolved on M. Decazes of refuting his own arguments of the preceding session; but the fates again interposed, and enrheumed him so terribly that he lost his voice. Meantime an eloquent discourse from general Foy, on the merits of the legion of honor, and the neglect into which it had fallen, since the royal ordinance of 1815 had arbitrarily reduced its members to half pay, was hailed by the public with rapture and applause. Events of this nature only served to fret the temper of M. Decazes, until at last in a moment of intense irritation he declared, that he neither wanted nor desired the support of the liberals. This unparliamentary ejaculation being made too, at the time he was laying aside the petitions of the public, by a majority of only four or five, and when the representation of four liberal departments was purposely kept *incomplete*, led to a general conclusion, that he was hereafter resolved to rely more on the favour of the "wind than the strength of his oar."

As there were but two real parties in France, the liberals and the aristocrats, it required more than human ingenuity to devise a law which should have the semblance of justice, and yet give to the neutrals the choice of deputies. Hence a variety of schemes more or less replete with Machiavelian ambiguity, were successively embraced and abandoned by the compet. This wavering and incertitude probably arose from a perception by M. Decazes, of the extreme reluctance, with which the ultras consented to support him. They were aware that by a little hypocrisy they would get the game into their own hands, but it went so much against the grain of their pride and vanity to pander a "parvenu," that they did it with an ill grace, which did not deceive him. It was understood, that in consequence of this discovery, he began early in February to negociate a reconciliation with the liberals, and had actually compromised with them; so that with a few changes for the worse, and a few for the better, things would have remained nearly as they were. The constitutional party. which had formerly consisted of two divisions (the circle of Lafitte which wished the constitution with the monarchy, and the circle of Terneaux which wished the monarchy with the constitution,) had been recently united by the common danger, and their concert rendered it more important to conciliate them. The 14th of February was the day finally selected for the development of the long expected law, and it is believed that by mutual concessions on the part of the liberals and the ministry, its obnoxious features would have been expunged. But unhappily on the preceding night, being the last Sunday of the Carnival, the season of mirth and festivity in Catholic countries, a political maniac found an opportunity near the opera of assassinating the Duc de Berri. This prince had not received from nature the powers of a vigorous understanding, nor from education, those refinements o behaviour which delight the French; yet he possessed a certain rude

valour and spirit of gallantry which had conciliated the affections of those who knew him well. Had he died in a natural way, his demise would have excited but little regret in the nation, although he was the only member of the French Bourbons, descended from Louis XIV. who promised to give an heir to the crown. But the atrocious act which destroyed him, and the manly resignation he displayed in his last hours, created an universal emotion of sorrow. Indeed, there is no crime the French detest more than assassination; which may be inferred, I think, from the fact, that during the last five years the number of suicides in Paris have nearly equalled one a day; and yet although they proceeded in a great degree from loss of employment occasioned by the restoration, not one of those unfortupate beings (before Louvel) attempted the life of a Bourbon.

The crime of Louvel was an immense calamity to France; for although it became perfectly evident that he had no accomplices, the ultras availed themselves of it to effect a change in the policy of the government, the deleterious consequences of which on the progress of liberty in the south of Europe, it is yet impossible to measure. The members of the royal family had deprecated from the beginning the liberal policy of the king, and they now threw themselves, in a paroxysm of grief, at his feet to implore permission to quit the kingdom, if he was resolved to persevere in his system. The fanatics united with them in attributing this assassination to the diffusion of liberal doctrines in politics; and when the Chambers met, M. Clausel de Coussergues in a violent rage denounced M. Decazes as an accomplice of Louvel, because that minister had exerted himself on several occasions to preserve the liberties of France. This absurd and factious accusation disgusted every rational mind. and was considered extravagant by his own party, who dreaded a coalition of the ministry with the liberals, and who therefore manœuvred with masterly adroitness to prevent it. They pretended that they would be satisfied to let the king retain his favourite, provided the minister would renounce his political heresies; and M. Decazes was so shallow a temporizer, that they caught him in the snare. The destinies of France hung for a moment on his decision. Unhappily he consented to an immediate abandonment of his scheme of policy, without ever

40

reflecting, that in relinquishing it, he would consummate the triumph of his enemies, by the seeming acknowledgement of his error. This was by no means his intention; yet he sent M. Pasquier down to the Deputies, to propose an abelition for a time, of personal liberty, and went up himself to the Peers, to propose the annihilation of the liberty of the press! The liberals heard these propositions with astonishment and indignation; but the ultras received them with ecstacy, for it put him in their power. They encouraged him therefore, to make a desperate harangue, like Anthony over the bloody robe of Cæsar, and then waited on the king with all the pomp of devotion and grief; they assured his majesty, that their principles, equally with their affection, bound them to an unlimited obedience to the dacisions of his wisdom; but that the dictates of their consciences, which they regarded as the inspirations of heaven, interdicted their concurrence in any measures good or bad, which proceeded from M. Decazes, because they considered him the secret enemy of the Bourbons, and a revolutionist, hurrying France to ruin. This communication fell like a thunderbolt on the minister, and is said to have touched the old king's heart with sorrow. Without the support of the royalists, there was no chance of a majority in either chamber, and therefore M. Decazes, in the bitterness of despair, solicited the king to finish the sacrifice, by accepting his resignation. But Louis felt the value of his services, and was unwilling that his late excessive zeal to please the royal family should be the cause of his ruin. His fate was consequently suspended some days, with a view of effecting a compromise with the liberals; and the government gazettes ceased suddenly to teem with diatribes against them. But there was no affection or confidence to solder such an union. and M. Decazes had placed himself in such an awkward predicament, that he could not recede with dignity, or hold his station with respectability. He felt this, and pressed the king to discharge him. In the mean time it was believed that the body guard of the king had formed a plot to seize him, and would have carried him off, but for the influence of the Comte D'Artois. At last, however, when it was ascertained that the ultras would not relent, nor the liberals consent to a suspension of civil liberty, the Moniteur announced, that in consequence of the

١

delicate health of M. Decazes, which required a journey to the south, the king had consented to accept his resignation of an office, which he had been holding for some time, with extreme reluctance. Then followed a royal ordinance, appointing him a duke, and ambassador to London.

Thus fell a minister, who possessed the finest opportunity that human ambition could desire, of rendering his name great and glorious in the annals of his country. To an acute and sagacious mind he added the adventitious charms of an elegant figure, an imposing carriage, and a conversation full of amenity and grace. To the activity of youth he united the regularity of age; and to great quickness of perception, an unwearied assiduity in his vocation. He was too, at one time, the favourite of the nation, as well as of his sovereign, and yet he fell almost unlamented. If time should not disclose the fact, that he sacrificed his popularity to the prejudices of his king; and that his temporizing policy and eternal vacillation were occasioned by the cautious reluctance with which Louis yielded to ameliorations. his reputation with posterity will be that of a shallow statesman, who threw away more advantages than nature and accident have been pleased to bestow on any one of his countrymén.

The last advice of M. Decazes to the king was disinterested and patriotic. Instead of seeking his revenge, by letting the royalists get into power, which would at that moment have thrown France into trouble, he persuaded the king to confide his government to men of calm and ingenuous loyalty, who might appease the wrath of the ultras, and give no shock to public opinion. The Duc de Richelieu was accordingly placed at the head of the administration; but as he declined being more than President of the Council, he was obliged to sign no order, and was not therefore a responsible minister. The well-known rectitude of his principles, however, allayed the jealous inquietude which the novelty of his situation might have otherwise excited; and his historical name gratified in part the anti-plebeian antipathies of the royalists, who were not a little dissatisfied to find their triumph, an ovation. M. Simeon, a lawyer of Aix, and a man of firm but moderate character, a friend of power without tyranny, who had recommended investing Napoleon. with the imperial purple, and was afterwards a minister under Jerome, was appointed to the interior department; and a son of the celebrated Mounier to that of the police. The other ministers retained their places, and exerted themselves in support of the arbitrary laws which were already proposed to the Chambers.

The act investing the government with the right of arbitrary imprisonment was unconstitutional, because the charter stipulated that no one should be deprived of his natural judges—it was unjust and tyrannical, because it gave the government the right of terrifying and punishing the innocent—it was inhuman, because the suspected individual was denied, (in even a dungeon,) the consolations of friendship, or the solace of conjugal affection—it was barbarous, because it refused counsel to the accused, together with any other nourishment than that which it pleased his accusers to give,—and it was impolitic, because it displeased the nation, and multiplied informers.

The act for abolishing the liberty of the press was iniquitous, because it punished all France for the offence of Louvel, whose crime no more justified this, than that of Ravaillac would have justified the abolition of the christian religion. It was impolitic, because it shook the foundations of the public confidence in the faith of the king; it was tyrannical, because it subjected private property (printing establishments,) to the caprice of the ministers; and it was infamous, because it poisoned the foundation which were beginning to irrigate the public mind with political instruction.

The supporters of these arbitrary laws contended that the newspapers were perverting the opinions of the French people, who had been created, by God, like all others, to be governed, and not to govern themselves. They forgot the suggestion of the Chancelier d'Aguesseau, that domination is never nearer its end than when it attempts to substitute caprice in the place of law, and thus reminds mankind "qu'ils sont ne's libres." Even the salutary and powerful objections to those iniquitous laws which were urged in the Chamber of Deputies by Gen. Sebastiani, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, were not heeded. "I have lived," said he, "in a country in which arbitrary power prevails in all its native beauty—where no constitutional shackles check the march of government-where no gazettes exist to pervert opinion, and where justice is prompt and expeditious, and yet notwithstanding, I have seen, in less than two years, eleven ministers, and what is still more, two sovereigns perish by conspiracy."

When a nation enjoys a free press, public opinion controls the government, and forces it to be tolerably correct, whether it wishes to be so or not; and when, in turn, a government neither leans to the side of negligence nor severity, it has nothing to apprehend from false charges. Besides, when the press is free, men are more cautious in making false assertions, which may be refuted, and which inevitably recoil with opprobrium on their authors. But when the press is enslaved, slander eludes detection, and morals become corrupt; for what temptation is there to be honest, when venality is placed on a footing with probity; when the press is not allowed to contradict encomiums passed on baseness, nor to vindicate virtue, if vilified by aspersion? A good government stands no more in need of a screen to conceal its actions from the scrutiny of public opinion, than an honest man does of a mask to hide his features. The more light there falls on merit, the brighter it is. Suspicions naturally float about in the atmosphere of arbitrary power, and like an invisible poison, execute their mission without giving any warning of their existence. It is but a few days since Spain gave a striking example of the instability of arbitrary power, when seemingly the most secure. Over the whole of that delicious realm the press was mute, and the murmurs of discontent were silenced—the spirit of liberty seemed extinct, for the patriots, who had fought to maintain independence and acquire liberty, and recover their king, were either dead, or exiled, or toiling at the galleys. The suspension of the sword of absolute power over the heads of the Spaniards, was supposed to have seduced the affections of their hearts, and the axe of the executioner was imagined to have inspired them with the true spirit of "dignified obeduence." On the night of the 6th of March, Ferdinand, the model of ultra monarchs, rocked himself to sleep, in the cradle of legitimacy, over the dungeons of the Inquisition, in which the spirit of liberty was immured; he awoke on the morning of the 7th, and behold, he was a captive, and a slave. By a singular concurrence of circumstances, the news of that astonishing revolution in Spain reached Paris, and was communicated to the ministers in the Chamber of Deputies when they were counting the votes on one of the arbitrary laws.*

Even in the Chamber of Peers a very noble opposition was made to the Censorship by seventy-four members, among whom Lanjuinais, Daru, Broglie, and Rochefaucault Liancourt, and many others distinguished for political integrity and talents. They only succeeded, however, in striking out an article for the immediate suppression of all gazettes.

A still more vigorous resistence against the relapse into tyranny was made in the Chamber of Deputies, and I shall long remember with pleasure the wisdom and eloquence displayed by the Liberals on that occasion; and which must continue to be a source of pride and satisfaction to the French, as long as they are worthy of respect as a nation. Day after day for more than a month the tribune resounded with the accents of enlightened patriotism and powerful talent. Those, who have formed light opinions of the parliamentary capacity of the French from the tumults that occasionally violate the dignity of the popular chamber, have only to read the discourses of the Constitutionalists to be convinced that there is no lack of ability or knowledge on the left side, at least, of the house. It was in vain, however, that Benjamin Constant reminded the ministry that the Convention, the Directory, and Bonaparte, had governed by arbitrary laws, and asked "where is the Convention? where is the Directory? where is Bonaparte?" It was in vain that the invincible Lafayetté reminded them of the disasters which an untimely resistance to public opinion had formerly brought on France, and showed the unshaken uniformity of his principles by exclaiming, "it is now three and thirty years since I rose in the Chamber of Notables to propose the abolition of the Lettres de Cachet, and I rise to day to protest against their re-establishment." It was in vain that the leading members of opposition urged the impolicy of removing from the government the props of public confidence; that Martin de Grey, Manuel, Chauvelin, Dupont de l'Eure, Bignon, Mechin, Foy, D'Argenson, Lafitte, Comille Jordan,

* Etienne.

Jobez, Gerardin, &c. called on the ministers not to violate the charter, which they considered a treaty of peace between the Bourbons and the French.

Six months ago this superb kingdom enjoyed a prosperous tranquillity;—a calm and progressive amelioration was observable in every part of it—the government was conciliating the public affection—hope entered into every heart, and the spirit of rational liberty was infusing new life into every mind. "Le peuple etoit heureux, le roi couvert de gloire." Now, irritation and inquietude prevail universally—the sudden and impetuous recoil of the government has jarred France to the point of dissolution—the abyss of revolution has been rashly re-opened and no human foresight can tell when it shall close again. The charter of France is recognized to be at the mercy of the king and a bare majority of the Chambers; the limits of prerogative and privilege are confounded, and the public liberties dependent hereafter on the generosity of the sovereign and the weight of his purse.

LETTER XIX.

My DEAR SIR,

Paris, April, 1820.

The reverence with which education and habit had formerly inspired the French nation for the family of Bourbon, had been destroyed by its exile and degradation. When it re-ascended the throne by the aid of a coalition of all the rest of Europe against France, it found the kingdom inhabited by a race of men, who had been so occupied by the splendid events and heroes of the new order of things, that they had nearly forgotten even the names of the members of the royal family. The restoration produced a resurrection of the noblesse, whom the revolution had thrown down; of the interests it had destroyed, and the principles it had vanguished. These were in direct hostility to the existencies* which had been recently created, and the king's first duty was to prevent the fierce collision of those opposite interests, by a judicious amalgamation of them. The royal charter was the bond of union between the interests of the revolution, and the interests of the ancient regime. It ought, therefore, to have been the point of honour in the government to guard its integrity with sacred punctiliousness. To subject it to the caprice of the monarch, and of a factious majority of the Chambers, was as absurd as the conduct of the child who tears up by the roots the young tree he has planted, in order to plant it over again. If the king did not think proper to adopt the Spartan Legislator, who exiled himself to avoid being tempted to change his constitution, as his model, it might have been wise in him to have remembered the example of that (I think) Italian republic, which required every one who proposed a change of a law, to come with a rope around his neck, so that if the proposal should be rejected, he might be hanged upon the spot. But

· Ouvres de Constant.

the horoscope of the royal charter, like each conjunction that presided over the birth of each of the ten constitutions of France, seems to have boded nothing but fickleness and change; and if the transit now taking place should not be fatal to the governors, they will owe their safety to the strong arm of the Holy Alliance.

I was present in the Chamber of Deputies during the debate on the law granting the right of arbitrary imprisonment to the government, when the minister of the Interior (a man of good sense and character,) produced the letter of a maniac, as a convincing evidence of the expediency and necessity of adopting that measure. I say the letter of a maniac, because the man who wrote it had been several years partially confined in the town of St. Denis, and had often demanded to be set at liberty or sent out of the country. It was a letter of congratulation addressed to the Mayor of the town, on the death of the Duc de Berri, expressing also a deep regret that the writer had not had the pleasure of killing him, but trusting that providence would reserve one of the royal family for his knife. It was heard with acclamations of applause by the coté droit, as a proof of the existence of an universal conspiracy "which was visible no where, but which existed every where." The persuasively eloquent tone of voice, and pathetic solemnity too with which M. Simeon read it, not only concealed at the moment its absurdity, but produced a great impression on those "whose credulous morality is so invaluable a treasure to crafty politicians."

A short review of the extent of the prerogatives and influence of the crown of France, may enable you to judge how far this transiliency of the government, from freedom to tyranny, was justified by the danger of popular encroachment. But as the authority of some high prerogative writer may be entitled to greater weight, than any suggestions of mine, on the relative state of royalty and liberty in France, I will transcribe for your perusal, the ideas of M. Fiévée, the editor of the Conservateur, and one of the oracles of *Oltraism*, on this subject. The royal power, says he, is composed, first of a civil list of thirty-four millions of francs, and of a revenue of five or six millions more derived from private domains—of the employment of a budget amounting to a thousand millions of francs, (near 200 millions of dollars)—the dis-

41

position of an active army of 240,000 men, of an army of reserve equally numerous, and of the foreign regiments, which from the circumstance of being foreign, belong particularly to the king. Secondly, Of the right of making peace and war, and all treaties-of choosing all ministers, ministers of state, under secretaries, counsellors of state, directors general, prefects, sub-prefects, and mayors, together with five or six thousand judges-of appointing, in fine, twelve or thirteen hundred officers (employés) of every description, removable at will, even when not paid by him, as mayors, councils of arrondissements and departments, officers of the national guards, (militia,) &c. Thirdly, Of the right of making nobles and peers, likewise at will;---and of a private justice, called "justice administrative" in virtue of which the twelve or thirteen hundred thousand salaried agents of administration, cannot be arraigned before the ordinary tribunals, without the authority of the administration. Such is the matériel de la royauté in France, and in opposition to it, let us now examine the much shorter inventory of the matériel de la liberté.

"Liberty isolated from all institutions, is confined to a chamber of two hundred and fifty-eight* deputies, charged to defend the interests of a population of near thirty millions of souls. Those deputies are elected under the ostensible influence of prefects, (agents of royalty) by colleges, of which the king appoints the presidents. The question of the right of an elector to vote, is submitted to a council of prefecture, appointed by the minister of the interior, with a right of appeal to the council of state, which is appointed by the king. Such is liberty in France; we cannot add to it the liberty of the press, nor of person, since they have been packed into the baggage of the police."

Now what possible danger, let me ask, could that Colossus of prerogative be in, from this puny bantling of liberty, among a people like the French, tired of commotion, and solicitous of repose. If what Sully said be true, that it is never from a wish to attack "mais par impatience de souffrir," that a people rise in rebellion, how very contrary to the public interest and opinion must have been the march of the French government, when with all this enormous patronage it could not even secure a majority in the chamber of deputies, or in the electoral colleges. It should be remembered likewise, that no man is entitled to a vote, unless

* At present 430 members. (1821.)

he pay SOOf. in taxes, and be thirty years of age; that there are only about one hundred thousand persons paying that amount, and that the votes fall far short of that number-that none but those who pay a tax of 1000f. and are forty years of age are eligible as deputies; that there are only 12,000 estates in France, assessed so high, and that many of these are in the hands of orphans, women, or peers of the realm, or persons under forty years of age;---that the rich reside mostly in Paris, and that half the deputies must have their domicils in the departments-that the number of the electors and the eligible likewise, is diminishing every day from the partition of estates, by the testamentary law; by the dimunition of direct taxes, and the increase of duties from an increase of foreign trade. Now, if with all these restrictions on the freedom of elections, the government could not secure a majority at will, is it not an unequivocal proof of the erroneousness of its policy? What will you think then, when you hear that the French ministry could not in adopting those tyrannical measures, procure a majority of twenty votes, although they kept the representation of four departments purposely incomplete? What will you think of the alleged dimunation of indepen. dence of character and sentiment in France, when you learn that one hundred and eleven deputies, (nearly half the chamber.) had the candour to publish their votes against those laws; and that out of near fifty public functionaries in the chamber, four (Gerardin, Camille Jordan, Courvoisier, and Royer Collard,) had the integrity to be in the opposition, even although the first was instantly expelled from office, as a terror to all the others? Can you think that the generous spirit of liberty, which actuated them, deserves to be stigmatized (as it has been even in England) as the vile spirit of faction? Can you believe that the wealthiest men in the kingdom-that D'Argenson, who is the largest proprietor of land, or Lafitte, who is at the head of the commercial and monied interest, or Terneaux, who is the greatest manufacturer in France,-can wish the dissolution of the government, and a second reign of anarchy?

The chamber of peers owes its existence to the present government and must stand or fall along with it. What doubt then can there be of its attachment to the present dynasty, or what reason, to believe it infected with jacobinical principles? Yet after an ani-

mated debate on the new laws, eighty-five members voted against them, and in this opposition were nine of the surviving Marechals of France, and almost every man of abilities in the house, not even excepting M. Chateaubriand who voted with honest independence, Such a minority, even in the more numerous house of lords in England, where great wealth and the hereditary possession of power, might be supposed to create greater independence, would terrify a minister into a change of measures. For as Mr. Burke observes, "the generality of peers far from supporting . themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their proper dignity, and to run headlong into an abject servitude." Here in France, where the house is young and created by his present majesty, such an opposition is the strongest evidence of the public disapprobation of the policy of the government. Tyranny never expires suddenly in any country where it has long prevailed. It dies very hard. It occasionally makes an effort of hectic vigour and blazes up with new life and light like an expiring lamp .-- But years are to tyranny in nations advancing in civilization, what moments are to the dying lamp-each succeeding one diminishes the vital aliment which feeds it, so that every effort at restoration, becomes weaker and weaker, until it sinks to rise no more. The era is gradually, but certainly approaching, when the constitution will be to the governors of a state, what the written law is to its judges; and when a minister of France will not venture to tell the deputies as one did the other day. "Qu'il y a quelque chose au dessus d'un droit écrit."

The revolution has corrected many of the defects of the French character, and has left the nation much better prepared for just government than it found it. Intelligence and good sense are much more generally diffused, and although the present government does much to retard their progress, it cannot arrest it. Without pretending therefore, to put on the mantle of Elijah, which conveyed the gift of prophecy, I think I may venture to suggest, that in spite of the present alarming condition of liberty in this country, the true euthanasia of the French constitution is a monarchical republic; and that not many years will elapse, (unless the deleterious shade of the Holy Alliance should wither and blast the prosperity of France,) before the

crown will be stripped of at least its unjust prerogatives. That the limitations necessary to render monarchy consistent with public liberty "must be great and many," and that "public liberty is more exposed under limited monarchies than under any other form of mixed government," as was observed by Bolingbroke, I am willing to admit; but vanity and the love of parade, may long keep up the forms of monarchy in France, after its powers and spirit are extinct. I know that this suggestion, that the progress of civilization is a slow poison to monarchy, is an offensive one to courtiers, because it is true; but I trust it is quite otherwise to you, a man of reason, "looking before and after." When interest prompts, they will alter their minds; for they can, when occasion requires, change the livery of their opinions, as the adder does his skin; and like him appear as smooth and glossy to-day, as if he had not worn another yesterday.

You may perhaps be disposed to regard my prediction of the progress of freedom in France, in spite of the present unfavourable auspices, as somewhat presumptuous. But if you will observe attentively the ill-omened prospects that have occasionally lowered on Great Britain since her rebellion; if you will look into her political authors, and mark the fatal auguries with which they abound, in consequence of a presumed decay of morals, religion, and the love of liberty, in the age in which the, flourished; if you will compare those false assumptions with her actual progress in civilization and liberty; in wealth, power. and glory; you will perceive how unfounded were all those boding dreams of her degeneracy and downfall. Even foreign philosophers fell into the drift of this canting absurdity. It is not quite a century since Montesquieu in his Notes on England, observed, "The English are no longer worthy of their liberty, for they sell it to the king; and if he were to give it back to them, they would sell it to him again." "Money only is esteemed among them; corruption gains ground every day; so that honour and virtue are little thought of; thirty years ago there were no thieves in London, but now they abound. Les choses ne peuvent pas rester long-temps comme cela." That these were the lighter opinions of their author is true; but when men of his gravity rail at the degeneracy of the times, and fall

into such gloomy prognostics of the future, is there not strong reason to believe that the declarations, which puny libellers are now so industriously circulating of the decline of the spirit of liberty and morality in France, will prove still more unfounded?

From the examples of the free states of antiquity, in which learning and opulence were necessarily confined to one class of people, and in which loss of liberty followed the loss of virtue in that small class, Mr. Hume was led to conclude, that the crown in England would in time swallow up the privileges of the people, and that despotism was the true euthanasia of the British constitution. He did not reflect that the march of civilization in England might keep pace with the march of that influence, and that the consequent increase of the weight of public opinion might counteract the increase of corruption incident to monarchy. In fact, the art of printing, and the trial by jury, by enabling a government to enlighten the great body of its citizens, has changed the destiny of nations. To judge therefore, by analogy, of the destiny of modern by the fate of ancient nations, or to infer the mutability of those from the accidental instability of these, leads to conclusions infinitely erroneous. Because a republican government, for example, might not suit at the same time the enlightened patricians of Rome, and the illiterate barbarians of Gaul and Pannonia, we are not justified in concluding that this form of government is incapable of prevailing over such an extent of territory. Nor have we a right to infer, that because the Roman republic degenerated into a despotism, when the patricians became luxurious and corrupt, that luxury and corruption among the nobles of a limited monarchy in modern times would produce the same effect; for, as I have already suggested, the diffusion of knowledge and wealth has created a self-renovating power in modern nations, which was not possessed by the ancients.

That luxury does not enervate the character, nor destroy the prosperity of modern nations, is clearly proved by the case of England, where its most splendid refinements have neither diminished the intellectual vigour, nor martial spirit of the people. Indeed, I do not think it possible for any judicious man to examine attentively the British character at each remarkable crisis of affairs for the last three hundred years, without coming to the conclusion that it is superior at present to what it ever was. As far as I can judge from the lights which history, memoirs, and political writings afford, I should say there never was an era in the history of Great Britain, when the principles of liberty were so well understood, or so generally prevalent, or so firmly planted in the hearts of the public, as the present. The disorders of the French revolution may have thrown a temporary cloud over those principles, and created an inordinate admiration of royalty; the blaze of glory which environed the crown at the termination of the late war, may have drawn off the public attention from them; political dandies or Ardelions who lounge about the court, may deride them; the king himself may be inclined to absolute power, and fancy himself legitimate, from being the fifth in descent; and the friends of strong government may rejoice in the increase of prerogative; but let them beware how they awake the nation, by urging the government to encroach on its rights, or to refuse those concessions which circumstances require. Should they ever, by such means, stir up the storm of civil commotion in England, I am very much mistaken if they do not find, from the long swelling wave of the multitude, that they have agitated a much wider and a much deeper sea than they had imagined. Many of them lull their apprehensions to sleep by the music of Mr. Hume's epicedium on liberty; but if a literary idler n ay venture on a bold conjecture, I should say, they will find that this acute metaphysician was as much led astray by antique prejudices in politics, as by new-fangled fancies in philosophy. I do not mean to say, that the people of England are now republicans, but only that the first shocks of another revolution would make them so. The whigs think that a thorough reform of the government would strengthen the present constitution; and they contend, that as the dispositions of the public are monarchical, no danger could result from it. The tories can scarcely doubt, that such a reform would promote the prosperity of Great Britain, and they are not inclined to deny that the nation are attached to monarchy; but they feel that there is no security for the continuance of this attachment; and that by drawing aside the screen from a more alluring prospect, the eyes of men might be naturally attracted away from the admiration of the old. But to return from this digression.

The Richelieu ministry do not go all lengths with the Ultra Royalists, but since the late coalitions, have become essentially the same in principle. To prevent, therefore, the French people from hearing the voices of the frank and liberal deputies, they supported a motion of Poyféré de Cère to exclude all strangers, except the Editor of the Moniteur, from the enclosure of the Chamber of Deputies. The stenographers of all the other journals were accordingly expelled, and the cords of the censorship thus drawn tighter, to strangle the vitality of thought.

The Liberal party proposed a variety of amendments to the obnoxious laws, for the purpose of softening their severity; but the trained band of ministerial voters was invincible. It was moved that the ministers should make known to the chambers the names of such arrested persons as they did not mean to have tried-that they should not have the right of confining a suspected person in a solitary dungeon-that a member of his family might be permitted to share his confinement-that a clergyman should be admitted to him to administer the consolations of religion, and that a certain sum should be appropriated to his support; but all these propositions were rejected by a small majority. In consequence of their failure many of the Liberals entered into a subscription for the relief of the families of such persons as might be confined on a suspicion of being suspicious. "Prevenu d'un soupcon." This association was reprobated by the government as illegal, and a prosecution ordered against many of its distinguished members. Among them was M. Lafitte, the rich banker, and the President of the Bank of France. who had never taken from this institution his salary of a hundred thousand francs, but who was immediately removed from his office by the king.

The chambers have been entirely occupied since the fall of Decazes in discussing the arbitrary laws, and have not, therefore, taken up the law of elections. The national aversion, however, is so strong, from the *projet* published in February, that it is to be withdrawn, and a new scheme of securing the choice of deputies proposed.* Thus has all France been unne-

[•] The new law of elections was adopted in June, after this letter was written. added to the Chamber one hundred and seventy-two members, to be chosen the *fourth* part of the electors, who pay the highest taxes, in each department.

cessarily agitated for some months, by the proposed law for destroying the elective franchise, which is now to be new modelled. At the opening of the session the king promised new guarantees to liberty, and instead of granting them, has already nearly accomplished the abolition of those which previously existed. Yet according to the English papers the French are a whimsical, factious set of Jacobins for complaining!

If you were to inquire of me whether I do not think this iniquitous assumption of power will drive the French (un peuple volage, as you consider them) to rebellion, I should answer, that I doubt whether it will. The evils which impel a nation unaccustomed to liberty, to insurrection, must be pressing and imminent. Men accustomed to arbitrary government must feel before they move. No severity will be exercised by the present ministers, who only mean to make those laws instruments of terror. You are not to infer, however, that nine tenths of the nation are not offended with those laws because they submit to them. They deplore the evil, but they have been so cruelly misled in their efforts to acquire liberty, that many of them look on it as a mere utopia, as the philosopher's stone in politics; whilst others have been so cozened and duped by political hypocrites as to doubt the existence of political probity. These circumstances combined with the omnipresence of the police, and the dread of the allies, may impose tranquillity on the nation, although they hear the clank of their chains and would willingly break them.

The French people have behaved themselves with great propriety and decorum, and therefore the injustice of smothering truth and letting falsehood loose to scourge them is the more flagrant. Temptation is now held out to every mean spirited scoundrel to become an informer, without the danger of being confronted with the man he accuses; the bonds of social confidence are again dissolved; the shield which protected integrity broken to pieces; and the government divorced from the nation. Unhappily too for mankind all the avenues leading to the ears of foreign potentates are guarded by the centinels of despotism, who distort and mis-

The two hundred and fifty-eight members are elected by the old electors, not by *departmental* solleges as formerly, but by colleges of arrondissement, each one electing a member. By these changes the independence of the electors is greatly diminished; and the richest fourth of them are doubly represented.

42

represent the views of their liberal antagonists. There is a sort of political legerdemain practised by the ministers of Europe, for the purposes of shuffling nations out of their rights, under the semblance of necessity; but their manœuvres have been so awkwardly performed in France, as to occasion a general disgust. Six months ago, Napoleon at the head of 20,000 men could not have reached Paris from any frontier of France, but if he were to land to-morrow with 200, he would arrive at the Tuileries sooner than he did from Frejus. There wants nothing but a torch to set all France on fire; but if she is wise she will remain quiet yet awhile. Things are not yet ripe in Europe for a general insurrectionary movement, and premature efforts are infinitely pernicious to the best of causes. The spirit of disaffection pervades the states of the Holy Alliance, sufficiently to alarm, but not to deter the coalition of despots from any unjust purpose. It serves to whet their instinctive hatred of liberty, and would make them rejoice in having an excuse for pouring their mercenary legions again into this superb country. They recoil with horror from all interference of the people in government. They already stigmatize as rebels the insurgent patriots of Spain, and sneer at her new ministers as galley slaves, because the most iniquitous and ungrateful of all governments, condemned them to honourable disgrace. The insular situation of Spain, may possibly secure her from the assaults of their hostility, but with what an elation of vengeance would they precipitate themselves on insurgent France. The young men of this country, are full of the sanguine intrepidity and adventurous confidence of youth, but if they are wise they will wait till time shall have thrown some of the cobwebs of oblivion over the late disasters of France, and until the neighbouring despots get into trouble at home.

The ministry are already alarmed at the national discontent; and are collecting troops in the vicinity of Paris to overawe the people. No regiments are suffered to remain long enough in any place to acquire local attachments, and yet the gazettes are not suffered to mention their change of position. The minister of war inquires into the political opinions of every officer and soldier. No liberal newspapers are admitted into the garrisons, and all officers who subscribe to such are sent on half pay. Thirteen lieut. generals, (among whom are Gerard, and Foy,) all covered with wounds and glory, are removed from command; all officers on half pay are surrounded by spies; and even the students of law and medicine are under severe *surveillance*.

In explaining to you the principles which actuate the political parties in France, I cannot pass over in silence, the facts revealed in a petition of M. Madier de Montjau, of Nismes, to the chamber of deputies. The petition first established by proof, the existence of a cabal of persons in Paris, styling themselves true royalists, whose object it was to induce the king to abjure clemency, and to rule with the sword, and who corresponded with secret committees in the provinces, organized expressly to defeat the salutary operation of every liberal measure of the government, and to "annihilate liberal doctrines." It pointed out the insecurity of person and property in the south of France, arising from the factious spirit engendered by this cabal-how it had led not only to the assassination of Brune, but of the king's officers Lagarde and Ramel; the murder of fifteen or twenty Protestant electors at Nismes, on the day of election-the shooting of several prisoners at Uzes-the burning of the chateau of Vaqueiralles-the flagellation of respectable women; the burning of M. Ladet alive, and the slaughter of near a hundred persons in a day at Nismes. It concluded by demanding the trial of the perpetrators of these notorious crimes; the prevention of the introduction of inflammatory circulars into the provinces, from the ultra committee in Paris; and asked of the government to station a body of troops at Nismes for the preservation of the peace.

The petitioner appealed to the keeper of the seals, to confirm the truth of these allegations, and there was no contradiction of them in the chamber. Yet the majority refused the public reading of the petition, and all interference! Such facts alone, might suffice to give an idea of the temper and principles of the supporters of the brutalizing doctrine of legitimacy.

> Le ravage des champs, le pillage des villes, Et les proscriptions et les guerres civiles, • Sont les degrés sanglants dont ce parti fait choix, Pour soutenír le trone, et pour donner des loix.

LETTER XX.

Paris, April, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

From the tenor of my animadversions on the genius and character of the two parties in France, you have probably concluded that the consequences of their systems are, in my opinion, as opposite as the extremes of good and evil. The principles of those who desire the establishment of a free and liberal government tend, I religiously believe, as directly to exalt the dignity of human nature, as the doctrines of their adversaries do to destroy human happiness, by preventing the development of the moral and intellectual faculties of our nature. But you are not to imagine, that because the ultra-royalists wish to perpetuate, under the name of legitimacy, the systems of servitude which were created by usurpation or conquest, and have been entailed on nations by ignorance, that they are radically malevolent and vicious at heart. Men may honestly pursue error; for self-interest is a great deluder of judgment, and habit is apt to reconcile the human mind to any excess of injustice. Those who have been impressed with prejudices in early youth, find it very difficult to discard them, even when their understandings have arrived at maturity; and hence, in every nation, men live after the fashion of their fathers. The ultra-royalists of France are, in a social point of view, a most amiable and delightful people; but they have been particularly and cruelly injured by the national dereliction from the old established principles of government, and it is scarcely surprising that they should honestly believe that the system, which was best for them, was best for every body.

I have not yet attempted to give you a distinct conception of the principles and objects of the court party in France, and as I hean to devote this letter to the curious infelicity of reasoning, by which they arrive at their conclusion, I will prefix to it a summary of their principles. You cannot doubt the uniform kindliness of Madame de Stael's heart, nor the general tendency of her writings to soothe and abate the fever of prejudice; and therefore, her impression of the wishes of the ultras can scarcely be an exaggerated one. "They want," says she, "an absolute king, and an exclusive religion, with intolerant priests; a nobility of the court founded on genealogy; a middle rank now and then enfranchised by letters of nobility; a people held in ignorance, and without rights; an army, a mere machine; a ministry without responsibility;-no liberty of the press; no juries; no civil liberty; but police spies and hired journals." Such was her candid opinion of the principles of those political ardelions, or intermeddlers in the science of government, whose errors proceed more, I am persuaded, from the head than the heart; and therefore, to point out to you the causes of their delusion, is in some degree to vindicate their integrity. In exhibiting, however, the singular sophistry by which they attempt to justify their creed, I must claim your indulgence for the desultory irregularity with which I throw together such observations as I have heard them let fall in occasional conversations.

Permanence and stability, say they, are the first requisites of good government, since a perplexing insecurity of person and property was the origin of society. Nature has given to man a sagacity commensurate with his wants, and therefore that form of government, which has been most generally adopted, is most consonant to nature. Now, no constitution of government has prevailed so generally, or lasted so long as absolute monarchy: and no form has been subject to such violent fluctuations and vicissitudes as the republican. Experience, therefore, points out the former as friendly, and the latter as hostile to the true ends of our being; and as reason should be guided rather by the results of experience than the visions of speculation, we conclude that every admixture of what is called liberty in government, is a diminution of the principle of good by the introduction of evil. The world has hitherto gone on very well; and is it not therefore absurd, if not sacrilegious, to suppose, that if it had been capable of any higher excellence, its creator, would have kept it so long in an imperfect state? The first fall of

man was occasioned by arrogance and presumption, which caused him to overleap the restrictions of nature; and since his fall, he has been perpetually misled by listening to the suggestions of reason, in preference to those of authority. His love of novelty has never left him, and hence, in the succession of ages, he has made a variety of experiments in government, yet, after infinite change and perplexity, has he not invariably returned to the primitive system? We consider the ancient regime of France as the perfection of this system, because it carried the human faculties to the highest state of perfection, and secured a happier condition to mankind during fourteen centuries, than any other system of polity ever did, during an equal period. We therefore desire its immediate restoration, in preference to this mongrel government, by which our king expects to cure the distemper of the times, and to slide us into our old position;but under which, we shudder to see "l'honneur en roture et le vice ennobli."

That the monarchical form of government has shown, in its development, a principle of improvement which has never appeared in the republican, is evident from the fact, that all free constitutions, from an inaptitude to control man in a high state of civilization, have expired in the progress of society, and given place to absolute monarchy. They have, in fact, no principle of self preservation, and are as changeable as the moon. They place man in an artificial condition, and can only be maintained by a perpetual watchfulness and effort against the resilient tendencies of his nature. Thus each republic

> "Devient un grand exemple, et laisse à la memoire, Des changements du sort une celatante histoire."-CORNELLI.

The charm of free government consists in the seductiveness of its theory, which dupes the credulity of men by flattering their vanity with such ideas as the partition of the sovereignty, and the calling the governors of states servants, instead of masters. Now we consider these notions ridiculous, "car c'est ne regner pas qu' être deux à regner," and because a "rose by any other name would smell as sweet." A false, shallow, and presumptuous system of philosophy in the last century bedecked the theory of free government with every meritricious ornament which might allure the imaginations of men, and all the super-

ficial thinkers in France were thus seduced from their allegiance to the good old dictates of experience. Our mad and atrocious revolution was the consequence. Because a handful of people on the other side of the Atlantic-a migratory nation without any fixed habits or settled attachments-without any neighbours to interrupt either by intrigue or arms, their eccentric scheme, had succeeded in patching up a precarious and temporary covering to hide the nakedness of their political wants, we vainly imagined that we, la grande nation, les superbes Français might follow their example. So we resolved to make an experiment of your liberty, and we soon experimented away our virtue, our respectability, our fortunes, and our lives. We have kept the political furnace in blast too these thirty years, forging consti-- tutions, and no one of them has lasted much longer than it took to form it. We were miserable under all of them, and therefore all written constitutions must be pernicious and destructive of the ends of human association. In fact, there is nothing good in politics but what is old-all that is thought new, has been tried an hundred times, and been as often rejected. Old folks are too wise to attempt to fly in the air, or to walk in the water The Siamese king (who, when told by a vapouring Dutchman, that the rivers became hard in Holland in the winter season, observed, that he had for some time suspected him of lying, and was sure of it then,) was so far from being a fit subject of ridicule, a man of sound discretion, and worthy of being a legitimate monarch.

The best government is that which is best administered, and how can a free one be well administered when all its agents must have a contempt for laws, made by people they know to be no wiser than themselves.

> "Mais on doit ce respect au pouvoir absolu De n'examiner rien quand un roi l'a voulu."

Besides, if free government were intrinsically good it would not suit us, because we French are too enlightened to be free. In countries where there are but few men capable of governing, the people may submit to them from deference to their superiority. But here in France we have so many capable and wise men that no one will consent to see his rival invested with a power which he thinks he could exercise better himself. "Lorque le peuple est maitre on n'agit qu'en tumulte Le voix de la raison jamais ne se consulte."

England is one of your models of fine government; and because an unprincipled system of brigandage has enriched her, you infer that her mongrel constitution is a good one, although her greatest statesman once admitted that if she would be just to France, it could not exist twenty years. But even if it were good for the control of a rough, selfish, half-civilized, and tumultuous people like the English, does it follow that it would suit us? Nature has prepared every nation by a peculiar concatenation of circumstances for a peculiar form of polity, and, therefore, your constitution mongers are not a whit more rational in wishing every nation to adopt the British constitution than the mad tailor who wished all his customers to wear coats cut to the same measure. Besides, what have the British gained by their boasted constitution? Are they not the most discontented, growling, mobocratic people on earthr Have they not nearly ruined themselves by fighting battles to keep other nations from following their own stupid example, in breaking the chain of legitimacy? Have they not loaded themselves with a weight of taxes which causes even all provisions to be adulterated, and destroys the comfort of domestic life? Have they not diminished the value of property almost to nothing by detestable philanthropic poor laws, for the support of paupers who do not thank thema for their folly? Has not England the most sanguinary penal code in Europe; and does not her government assure us that the bonds of society there are so relaxed, and the temptations to crime arising from the necessities of the people, so great, that the softening of those statutes would be infinitely dangerous? Do not the ministerial reviews inform us of a melancholy diminution of the social sympathies there, even between master and servant, who are becoming so disunited by mutual independence of each other, that those acts of reciprocal kindness, which formerly endeared the connexion have nearly ceased? Do they not tell us that nothing but the strong hand of power keeps down the mutinous spirit of radicalism.

> "Ainsi la liberté ne peut être utile Qu'a tormer les fureurs d'une guerre civile."

Since a century then has produced all these evils, are we not

right to hug the chains of legitimacy as the shackles which an all-wise Providence designed for us?

The religious toleration too which prevails in England is not. only foreign from our national habits, but is ascertained even there to be as pernicious as political liberty; for what has it done but multiply sects, sow dissention in the nation, and encourage the apostles of infidelity in their sacrilegious scheme of breaking down the existing order of church and state? Are we not assured that the English canaille are growing worse every day, and that vice and disaffection keep pace with one another-that in spite of the constant employment of the gallows, and the transport ships to drain that country of its vicious population, the number of crimes is alarmingly augmented, and culprits known to commit offences in order to be transported, and then to thank the judge for sentencing them to Botany Bay? Are not these facts sufficient to convince any man that the boasted constitution of England, like the blood of Minotaur, causes serpents to spring up in the land it touches?

If the English government be really a good one, why is not the nation satisfied with it? Why is it eternally clamouring after reform? Is not this clamour alone a convincing evidence of the viciousness of its nature? a viciousness of which they seem as sensible as other nations; for in what instance did they ever recommend the adoption of their constitution in other countries? Is human nature so radically malevolent, that a whole nation can take pleasure in withholding from its neighbours the knowledge of a secret on which their prosperity and happiness depend? Did not the English outlaw and desolate their provinces in America, even with the tomahawk and scalping-knife, for declaring that taxation without representation was illegal? Are not parents always wiser than their children, and did not England therefore know better what was good for America, than America knew what was good for herself?

We equally defy the enemies of legitimacy to prove the excellence of the representative principle in government by the practice of England at home, for her constant policy has been to struggle against its encroachments. That the delegation of legislative power to a representative assembly is not only an unnatural arrangement in civil society, but destructive of the true ends of government, temporal repose and eternal beatitude, is substantially evident from the necessity Great Britain has been under of retaining her rotten boroughs, in order to enable the crown to purchase a majority, and thus pull the cords behind the curtain. Men are pleased in beholding a complicated machine, because it flatters the vanity of their nature, and many were once duped into the belief that the British constitution was the most stupendous monument of human wisdom. But who can now doubt its monstrosity, since, in order to remedy its defects, and regulate social relations under it, more volumes of law have been created than a rich advocate can buy, much less hope to peruse? Croyez moi, monsieur, "le pire des etats, c'est l'etat populaire."

No matter what may be the follies or corruption of those who have governed England, political cecity is not to be charged against them. When they incorporated Scotland into England, for example, although they were obliged to sacrifice something to public prejudice, they were aware of the danger of entrusting power to the canaille, and therefore restricted the right of suffrage so much, that scarce three thousand persons out of two or three millions enjoy it. Some parts of England elect many members to parliament, and others none at all; yet, in the language of Mr. Burke, "what advantage do you find, that the places that abound in representation possess over the others, in security for freedom, and security for justice. Are the local interests of Cornwall and Wiltshire, for instance, their roads, canals, prisons, police, better than those of Yorkshire and Staffordshire? Is Wiltshire the pampered favourite, whilst Yorkshire, like the child of the bondwoman, is turned out to the desert? On the contrary, is not the latter nursed with a steadier hand, with less bias against the general good from local interests, passions, prejudices and cabals?" Such, at all events, were the deliberate conclusions of the great oracle of British statists, whose testimony weighs more heavily in our favour, because he set out with a fondness for liberty, but grew more and more enamoured, every day that he lived, with the spectacle of dignified obedience to authority which France exhibited under her legitimate monarchs. Ah! with what melancholy pleasure do we

look back to those good old times of tranquillity and contentment, when a proper sense of submission pervaded the minds of men, and when subjects obeyed their kinge, as children obeyed their fathers!

> "Quand les meilleurs soldats, et les chefs les plus braves, Mettoient toute leur gloire à devenir esclaves."

Is it not painful to reflect on the degeneracy of modern times; on the unnatural excitement of low ambition, which instigates every beggar to tread on the heels of every gentleman, and every gentleman to pant to be a king? Even those nations which were formerly so proud of submission that they could not be driven into revolt, have been so changed by pernicious theories of the rights of man, that their monarchs cannot dare to tighten the reins of government, so as to make them feel the curb, without causing, as in Spain a few days since, a furious rebellion.

Even the Germans, (a people of steady habits, whose intellectual composure and perseverance in the customs of their ancestors, promised to exclude the political plague longer from them than any other people in Europe,) have gone on dreaming and speculating until they have introduced a dry rot into their old fabric of government. Frederick the great, in a fit of philosophical delirium, forgetting that among the people, "tout ce qui pense, conspire," set the Germans to thinking and discussing moral questions. He fancied that the national phlegm would prevent speculative absurdities from ever becoming principles of action. But the inert, irresolute and obstinate character of that people, peculiary fits them to be duped by fine theories. The confusion and changes consequent on the French revolution, augmented the mass of pestilent matter, which had been long accumulating there in the . societies of Free Masons, Illuminati and Tugendbund. Hence in the minor states along the Rhine, the public have triumphed over their governments-representative assemblies are establishedthe contagion spreads every day-and our good old principles have no longer any security but in the protection of the Holy Alliance. Even our king admits that the dangers of innovation are closely connected with the advantages of amelioration; and for our parts, we conceive that it is better to abstain from a chance of the latter, than run the risk of the former. The Holy

Alliance sprung out of the conviction of the necessity of restraining the vicious principle of reform; and has no other object than the protection of legitimate governments against popular usurpation. By legitimate governments, we understand those, which (having long existed,) are therefore conformable to the order of nature, in contradistinction to those which have arisen out of popular insurrection. Political sophists have imagined that absolute monarchy, like the bad forms of government, originated in the consent of the people, and was consequently bottomed on a social contract, or compromise between the governors and the governed. But this is a false imagination, invented to father their theories and undermine the true order of things. The first kings were not made by the people. They were created first, and the people afterwards, as in the case of Adam, who was invested with absolute dominion over "every living thing that moveth on the earth," first in Paradise and afterwards in Eden. But even if this power had not been expressly delegated, is it not clear, that since God created "man in his own image" it was the intention of divine wisdom, that he should copy heaven, in adopting the absolute form of government? We are commanded by St. Paul "to obey the powers that be," and it should be kept in mind that before this command was given, the wisdom of providence had overthrown and rooted out those plagues of nations, the republics of Greece and Rome. The awful depravity of morals to which those governments conducted mankind, produced a salutary effect on the human mind, and caused the general prevalence of legitimate dominion, until the Italian republics started up of a sudden to disturb the tranquillity of the world. Their hour of retribution however soon arrived, and they have been scourged from that day to this, by extreme degradation, for their temerity and their crimes.

Next happened, of all the events recorded in history, the most disastrous to the cause of legitimacy—the rebellion in England. If when that most villanous explosion broke out, and when the audacious rebels cut off the head of that blessed martyr king Charles, all Europe had risen with indignant rage, and vindicated the sacred cause of royalty; by the extirpation of the whole race of regicides or roundheads, we should have heard no more of their atheistical jargon and canting philosophy. The repose of Europe would have been secured in that case on solid foundations for ever-and that stately and majestic edifice, which the wisdom of fourteen centuries had erected in France, would have continued to shelter us and our children's children, instead of offering to our regards as it now does, a spectacle of ruin, which we can never sufficiently lament. The English rebellion, however, was suffered to pass with impunity, and the contrition with which that nation seemed to repent of its crimes, after the restoration, lulled Europe to sleep. But under the simulation of passive obedience. the children of the roundheads cherished the disorganizing principles of liberty, and the revolution was the natural offspring of the rebellion. A mild, religious and legitimate monarch like James II. was too good for a people become unprincipled by the triumph of vice, and therefore his thankless daughter and her ungrateful husband, the Prince of Orange, usurped his throne. Had Louis XIV. then prevailed on all Europe, to unite in the Holy Alliance and crusade against England, he might have strangled the political Hercules in its infaney-have consolidated the foundations of legitimate monarchy, and have secured to England herself to-day, a degree of happiness equal to that she enjoyed under the parental government of her Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts. But he committed the fatal error, of looking with an eye of contemptous indifference on that transaction, as the crime of a half civilized community, and never suspected that its impunity might cause it to distemper the body politic of Europe. Yet it has actually eaten its way like a canker into the heart of nations, and has done more to doff the plumes of prerogative than all the Utopian schemes of government that ever were written, put together. The film has at length, however, fallen from the eyes of monarchs. They see with Cæsar in Voltaire that "la liberté n'est plus que le droit de se nuire."

The Holy Alliance promises to perpetuate legitimacy by crushing hereafter every effort of political reform. The introduction of Russia into the system of Europe is what has saved us. Her remoteness from the scene of contagion has prevented the new doctrines from soiling the purity of her primitive impressions, although D'Alembert untruly said, she was rotten before she was ripe. The immense extent of her territories will enable her to spend some hundred thousand lives a year in

our service; so that if we can keep England in our interests, and check the progress of innovation until Bonaparte dies, we shall succeed in putting down the constitutional system. A death blow might have been given to it when we overthrew the usurper, but for the ridiculous vanity of the Emperor Alexander, who was pleased with the cheering of the canaille, and whose dread of Bonaparte scared him into a temporary liberality. But he is recovering his.senses. Some contrariety he has recently experienced from his new Pelish diet, has done him good, and he may yet become our Tiberius. If we had not put down Bonaparte the second time, the constitutional scale might have become as heavy as the absolute, and an unlucky balance of power might have been preserved in Europe. But now we have nothing to do but administer opiates to England, and all is safe; for our king thinks, that in twenty years he will have restored the ancient regime, if no popular revolution occurs in the neighbouring countries, which are, however, sadly infected by the scum which boiled-over out of France during our revolution. Spain, Portugal, and Italy are cankered to the core. The lesser German states, and Switzerland, and the Pays Bas, are gorged with poison. Prussia is fundamentally diseased; Denmark is inoculated; Sweden is the surviving blot on legitimacy; and we are not quite sure that the pestilential miasma has not passed into Greece, and even made some invasion of Austria. But Russia-Russia shall orientalize us, and embalm the sacred principles of legitimacy.

No government can be good but that in which the wise govern the ignorant. The invention of the art of printing, by diffusing knowledge beyond its proper sphere, has destroyed the equilibrium of the balance of civil society. Too-much light blinds weak eyes, and the poet was wise who said, "a little learning is a dangerous thing." It serves only to bewilder the brain, and to smother the instinctive lights of nature by the fumes of undigested crudities. No man fancies himself so wise as he who knows little, and hence positiveness in argument is an evidence of error of opinion. That the excessive multiplication of books must ruin society is evident, for how can the choice, deliberate, and sublime reflections, opinions, and imaginations of men, whom providence has gifted with high powers of genius, be fit food for beings who have neither the capacity to understand, nor the leisure to study them? "à quoi bon alors instruire la canaille? quelle necessité qu'ils sachent lire?"

That the invention of printing has been, upon the whole, pernicious to mankind, is admitted by some of your pretended republicans. What says Fisher Ames on the subject? "The press has left the understanding of men just where it found it; but by applying an endless stimulus to their imaginations and passions, it has rendered their temper and habits infinitely worse. It has inspired ignorance with presumption, so that those who cannot be governed by reason are no longer to be awed by authority. It has rendered the many susceptible of more than womanish fickleness of caprice. It will change, but it is difficult to conceive how, by rendering men indocile and presumptuous, it can change societies for the better. While it has impaired the force that every just government can employ in self defence, it has imparted to its enemies the secret of that wild fire that blazes with the most consuming fierceness on attempting to quench it."* What good can possibly result to society from having its conservative bonds loosened by a subtile poison, distilled through the distempered minds of philosophers and atheists? What advantage can a legitimate government derive from the conversion of its bosom into a hot bed of sedition and impiety, to breed up a nest of traitors to disturb its repose? Alas! with what regret must every friend to order look back on those good old times, when the due proportion of the world was ignorant, and contented to remain so! "L'ignorance vaut mieux qu'un savoir affecté. "

One of the most deplorable consequences of the discovery of the art of printing, is the facility with which any chimera may be imparted to the multitude. The press ran France mad-first in pursuit of liberty and equality-then after military glory-

• The opinions of Mr. Ames on that subject, have been since quoted with approbation, even in England.—Quarterly Rev. Oct. 1820, p. 577, where the reader may find also this exclamation, "Oh folly, to believe that the press, like the spear of Telephus, possesses a virtue, which can heat the wounds it makes! Oh madness, to suppose that the press can counteract the evils which the press is producing! As well might you expect to restore a maniso to his senses by putting into his hands a treatise on the right use of resson."

† Despréaux.

and now, after representative monarchy. The two former visions have long since vanished, and the last infatuation will follow them; for we shall soon feel, that where law-makers are annually changing, there will be no security of person or property. Now a legitimate prince is uniform in all he does, and having no motive to injure or annoy his subjects, is of course beloved by them.—But a new acquirer of power, on the contrary, is obliged to be severe and rapacious, to maintain himself on the throne.

That a public assembly, is more liable to commit crimes than a monarch, we friends of legitimacy think demonstrable. When an individual acts alone, he is restrained by a sense of responsibility and honor from doing wrong, and hence the acknowledged fact, that a man has more integrity in his private, than in his public capacity as a member of a corporation. When he acts with a party, the check to bad actions is so weakened by division that it scarcely operates at all, and thus the same man who might recoil from injustice, when acting singly, might support it when he felt himself encouraged by the sanction of public opinion. Hence every public body has two existences, the one, private and particular, among its individual members, the other, general, from the combination of the majority, which naturally despises the clamour of the opposition, and which acts as a single individual led on by the allurements of self interest, unrestrained by a just sensibility to fame. For this reason the most unprincipled of all tyrannies is the usurped domination of a public assembly; and as it is self-evident that its aggregate voice comes at last to be the mere act of an individual, is it not clear, that the substituting the government of an assembly for the government of one man, is the preference of the rule of a licentious or profligate person above that of a man legitimately born to power and exercising it under the nicely balanced and powerful control of duty and honour? The true interest of the nation must be the true interest of its king, and when he has all power in his own hands, he is incapable of usurpation; but the interest of a parliament in a monarchy, may be the interest of an avaricious and despicable cabal of its members, and therefore in direct opposition to the public interests. In this case, when the happiness of a nation becomes inconsistent with the schemes of the cabal into

whose hands absolute power talls, we may easily imagine which will be sacrificed.

The true way of testing the correctness of any principle, is to give it latitude; and in the National Convention the character of the representative principle was fully developed. After that body usurped the government it waged war against every thing that bore the semblance of virtue in France, yet even the conduct of that mad assembly was an indirect recognition of the suprems beauty of simple monarchy; for when they had done cutting of the heads of their adversaries, they set to cutting off one another's heads, either from an impatience of reciprocal control, or from the secret desire of each member, to be the last surviving individual, in whom all power might centre. These rebels and regicides were too wicked to believe in revelation, but reason told them, that the nearer the creations of art approach to the existences of nature, the more perfect they must be; and therefore, since the government of heaven is the rule of one absolute will, they attempted instinctively to copy that sublime prototype.

The punishment of all offenders, is absolutely necessary to the well being of society. Now no human foresight can provide laws, which may not be eluded by dexterity or cunning. From this circumstance, criminals under representative governments, must often escape with impunity; and therefore the good order of society, is best maintained, by lodging a discretionary power of punishment in the hands of a king, who being born above mankind, is not prone to abuse his authority, and who being delegated by heaven, must be necessarily wise enough for the discharge of his duties. The trial by jury too, is one of the desolating appendages of the representative system. This institution which owes its origin to a barbarous age is manifestly inconsistent with the present enlightened state of France, where some persons are extremely wise and virtuous, whilst others are stupid and vicious. Can any man suppose for a moment, that twelve men selected by lot or caprice, from the body of the community can understand law and equity, as well as those who have studied them all their lives, and who may be selected as judges by the king, in consequence of their talents and virtue? Is there any man of sense who would not sooner submit the decision of his case to the judgment of such enlightened men, rather than to the unprincipled caprice of persons selected indiscriminately from the body of the community? Another evil arising from the trial by jury, is the habit it creates among men who serve as jurors, of judging for themselves, than which nothing can be more fatal to absolute government, which only requires of its subjects to be obedient. The arguments of the opposite counsel, when the session of a court is public, not only exercise the reason of the jurors, but of all the auditors; and when men investigate the merits and demerits of every question, they acquire the presumptuous habit of forming their own conclusions, and thus destroy all uniformity of opinion--

> "Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell, Uproar the universal peace, confound All unity on earth."

We, the friends of legitimate government, hold your maxim of common law, that it is better that an hundred guilty men should escape, than that one innocent should be punished, to be false. In war it is necessary to sacrifice the lives of a few worthless soldiers for the preservation of a nation, although they are guilty of no crime; and you must admit that the liberty mongers have never shewn themselves more scrupulous than other governors in the expenditure of human life in the field. In peace we hold a similar sacrifice to be sometimes necessary for the conservation of society, and if you take from the king the power of condemning his subjects when it becomes necessary, you endanger the whole order of society for the sake of shielding from punishment a few useless individuals who might probably take pleasure in disturbing the public tranquillity. Every one knows too how reluctant men are to shed blood when they regard the accused as an equal, and how apt sympathy is to overcome expedient justice on such an occasion. Now this very bias of a jury takes out of the hands of government the discretionary power of condemnation, and how can any government exercise the first of all duties, that of self preservation, without this power? What has become of this necessary attribute of royalty since the erection of juries in France? Have not these bodies almost invariably judged state criminals after the irregular impressions of their own iniquitous caprice, and thus obliged the government to create prevotal courts or tribunals of summary justice.

It is a common adage, that "birds of a feather flock together." Now we know that men are naturally wicked,-that wickedness will be tolerant of wickedness, and may we not, therefore, infer that when a jury is left to itself it would never punish any culprit? It very often happens too that in order to deter others from crimes, it is necessary for the government to punish persons against whom there is no positive proof, but only strong grounds of suspicion, and this can never be done by a trial by We do not assert that men are so corrupt as to enter into jury. a conspiracy to acquit all criminals, in order to secure impunity to vice, but we say that the emancipation of the tribunals from the proper control of government leads to anarchy, and in the end produces the same effect as such a conspiracy. The danger of investing government with that discretionary power is entirely imaginary, for such is in Europe la douceur de nos mœurs, that violent tyranny is not to be apprehended. It is a just remark of Mr. Hume, in his Essay on Civil Liberty, that out of about two thousand absolute princes, great and small, who have existed in Europe in the last two centuries there has not been one, not even Philip II. as bad as Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, who were four out of twelve of the Roman emperors. In the multiplied relations of civilized society accidental evil is inevitable. Good and evil are so mingled together in this life that every blessing is associated with pain; and surely the happiness of a great nation is cheaply acquired when it is purchased at the expense of a few disorganizers. S'il faut que le gouvernement fasse tomber dix têtes de perturbateurs par semaine, qu'est ce que cela nous fait? au moins le monde est tranquille. In order to enable a king to take good care of his subjects his will should be the supreme law.

> Car le plus innosent devient soudain coupable, Quand aux yeux de son prince il paraît condamnable, C'est erime qu'envers lui se vouloir excuser; Notre sang est son bien, il en peut disposer; Et c'est à nous de croire, alors qu'il en dispose Qu'il ne s'en prive point sans une juste cause.—COBNEILLE.

The greatest errour our king has committed was his granting a charter to France, since it was giving a sort of royal sanction to the revolution; and he must know that no revolution can be just, unless it proceed solely from the monarch. By this charter the persons among us the most illustrious by their birth, are reduced to a level with the upstart Jacobin nobility of the revolution; the purchasers of the plundered property of the "murdered monarchy" and church of France are confirmed in their possessions; the word-warriors, or *bavards*, are suffered to traduce us with impunity; there is no longer any way of preventing mea from disgracing their families, by lodging them in a bastile; and the canaille are granted the right of petition, which is an admission that they may be badly governed, and an indirect acknowledgement of that jacobinical fiction, the sovereignty of the people.

Our old military system in France was superb. Our army was the mirror of honour, discipline, and loyalty. Ats battles were feats of gallantry—mere bloody tilts and tournaments which raised the reputation of the nation, without doing much harm to its enemies. The officers being born to command were free from that insolent vanity which rendered our revolutionary invasions of foreign countries mere storms of brigandage, the disgrace of France and the shame of chivalry. Our old soldiers were perfectly satisfied with their condition because they knew that they were destined to it, and could not rise beyond a certain sphere; but now since all restrictions are removed, and since the king is bound to promote about one half of the officers by seniority, ambition and envy rankle in every heart, and each soldier is sighing after "le baton du marechal Oudinot."*

These innovations, however, cannot last. When we have run through all the phases of folly we shall see the wisdom of our good old system. The death of the Duc de Berri has just opened the eyes of the king on the errours of his policy. He has already begun to modify and curtail the charter, and if he should not live long enough to abolish it, his successor will. The factious politicians who wish to overturn royalty, pretend to deny that the right of rescinding the charter is one of the prerogatives of the crown, although they know that absolute power is inherent in, and inalienable from it. The king's power existed anteriour to the charter, and is, therefore, superior to it. He may abstain if he please, for a time, from the exercise of his rights, but he cannot limit them permanently; for as his authority is a divine delegation to him during his natural life, he is bound te

* See Louis XVIII.'s address to his troops,

transmit it unimpaired to his successor. To suppose the contrary is absurd, for if every king had the right of diminishing prerogative at pleasure what would become of royalty, that emanation and copy of divine perfection? If a king were to cut off his right hand, his heir would not be born with a similar mutilation; and in the same way if a king were to lop off any of the branches of prerogative, his successor might restore them.

> "La justice n'est pas une vertu d'etat; Rien n'est illegitime qui peut servir Cesar."

But, say the Jacobins, the king has sworn to support and preserve the charter. True, but since his majesty's oath binds him to God, and not to the nation, what right can the nation have to rebel, if circumstances induce him to break it? Is it not an affair between him and heaven? Besides, the supreme head of the state, in swearing to follow certain rules in the administration of his government, cannot be supposed to swear to adhere to a system which subsequent events may prove to be pernicious, but only to pursue it as long as he knows it will advance the public good. To swear to follow a certain rule of action, right er wrong, (without mental reservation,) would be both impious and absurd; and what man, in his right senses, could suppose that a legitimate monarch would voluntarily do an act which was either sacrilegious or ridiculous?

It is melancholy to reflect how much the revolution has done to unsettle the convictions of men-to root out the good old doctrine of obedience from the strong holds which education had secured to it, and to plant the pernicious ideas of the rights of man in their places. Nor shall we ever succeed in destroying these crazy fancies, unless we can place education in the hands of our agents, which can only be done under the mantle of religion. As the twigs are bent, so the trees grow; and we shall never have them bent all one way, if we leave it to private reason to direct them; for reason is a fallacious guide, and leads to infinite diversities of opinion; whereas, the voice of authority is one, and therefore uniform. No two sects in politics or religion, who follow the dictates of their understandings, think alike.

Now as truth is one, and error manifold, is it not clear, that by the lights of our understanding we are led astray, and consequently, that providence would never have designed us to follow them. Of what use then is the Lancastrian system of education, but to breed discontent among the poor? Of what use are all the innovations and discoveries of modern times, but to break the order of nature?---of what use is vaccination itself, but to increase population beyond the means of support, and to hand over to famine, or the consumption, those who might as well have gone off with the small pox? Legitimate monarchy wants no learned men, nor artificial inventions to support it. Its structure is so plain and consonant to the ends of our being, that the simple instincts of nature are amply sufficient for it. Let us resign ourselves then, to the guidance of those who are wiser than ourselves, and let us pin our faith on the judgments of those who are delegated to direct it. Happy in the enjoyment of the good things which we may find spread around us, let us not indulge an inordinate spirit of rapacity; let us not seek to pass beyond the limits which nature has wisely assigned us, but remain satisfied that whatever is bad, is just as good as it ought to be.

Such, my dear sir, are the paralogisms by which absolute monarchy may be defended, and some of which I have heard used by its admirers. I have run you much further through the serpentine obliquities of sophistry than I at first designed to do; but what I have said, may serve as a fair specimen of the circuition of argument, by which the modern doctrine of legitimacy is upheld. If you are able to preserve the equanimity of your temper, and your respect for mankind when you reflect that most of the civilized nations of the earth are governed by such maxims, it is more than I have always done in considering the diminution they occasion in the mass of human happiness. The era may not be very remote, however, when they shall be known to have existed only by the learned, and when the records of them shall be classed among the most curious evidences of human imbecility; for, as Dugald Stewart justly observes, "this is remarkable in the history of our prejudices, that as as the film falls from the intellectual eye, we are apt to la the all recollection of our former blindness."

Communities that have been long subject to the tutelage of arbitrary princes, are, from a habit of attributing their ills to necessity, and their blessings to Providence, peculiarly slow in conceiving the advantages of innovation. But such is the progressive march of civilization in Europe, that sounderviews begin to prevail on the subject of government, and it is no longer possible to prevent nations from opening their eyes to the light. It is to be hoped, that the adversity of France is finished; and that it is so, I have no doubt, unless the government madly plunges her a second time into trouble. The French are beginning to comprehend the nature of freedom, and to be inured to its language. The Jugernaut of Jacobinism is no longer mistaken for a tutelary deity: but the real goddess of liberty begins to smile on this realm and to woo the multitude with a proper becomingness of discourse. May the monarch, too, be wise enough to heed her voice, and to reject the counsel of those misguided friends, who only seek to extend slavery and desolation on earth.

LETTER XXI.

Paris, April, 1820.

My DEAR SIR,

Having endeavoured in the preceding letters to sketch a moral and political portrait of the French nation during the last three centuries, and to trace more especially the causes of the various revolutions of their government in the last thirty years, I will now call your attention to the consequences of those systems as they stand embodied at present in France. Mankind have been recently astonished at the resources of this country, and at the recuperative energy with which it has risen under the pressure of unprecedented calamities. In order, therefore, to explain this mystery of power, it is necessary to examine the hitherto unobserved progress this nation has been making in civilization and wealth. The truth is, that the interests of the new governments were not always (as they seemed to be) in opposition to the interests of humanity; and that such was the accumulation of evils under the old regime, that in spite of the errors of the unwise and mischievous systems which were substituted in lieu of it, a great diminution of them took place. The present vigorous prosperity of France is the result of the comparative advantages she has of late enjoyed, and the surprise of foreign nations at it, arises from the illiberal prejudice with which they have hitherto confined their attention to the inconveniences only of her situation. So abundantly blessed is France in the mildness of her climate and the fertility of her soil, in the industry of her inhabitants and the philosophical gayety of heart, with which they throw off the cares of life and escape from the corrosions of ennui, that nothing less than the stupid restraints of an arbitrary regime and an inveterate adhesion to prejudice, could have limited to their present imperfect development the unfolding of her capacities.

Some remarks on the present state of France and the defects of her municipal regulations may explain the nature of the prejudices to which I allude; and may not, therefore, improperly precede an account of the great progress she has made in agriculture, manufactures, and internal commerce. The new territorial division of the kingdom by breaking down the barriers which prevented much intercourse between the provinces; the division of the great estates, and the placing them in the hands of persons immediately interested in their cultivation; and the abolition of the laws of Jurandes and Maîtrise, by removing the old restraints on the exercise of trades, have tended to advance immensely the productive industry of the kingdom. The shackles, on the contrary, which the monopoly of all action into the hands of the government, and the centralization of all power at Paris, have fastened on domestic industry and on the enterprize of private companies, have considerably retarded the development of the national resources.

France is at present divided into eighty-six departments, over each of which presides a Prefect or Governor, with a General Council for the execution of the laws and royal ordinances. The Departments are sub-divided into arrondissemens, in each of which there is a Sub-Prefect, with a local council. The arrondissemens are divided into cantons, and these are again divided into communes, over each of which presides a Mayor and municipal council for carrying the laws and ordinances directly into effect. This arrangement is admirably symmetrical in its parts, but detestably arbitrary in its operation. Under the semblance of an independent administration of justice, it subjects the interests of every commune in the kingdom to an absolute dependence on the orders of the Minister of the Interior. As all the municipal officers hold their places at the pleasure of the king, or his minister, none dare offend him, and there exists no responsibility for malversation in office, so that the salutary control of public opinion is in a great degree lost, for the previous consent of the government is necessary to the prosecution of its agents. Those municipal bodies have no discretionary powers, except in the execution of commands. As they can originate, and finally determine on no one thing, the inhabitants of a commune can execute no scheme of improvement without petitioning through a concatenation of authorities, which occasions a delay that damps most terribly the ardour of social enterprize. The most trifling local repairs, equally with the most important works of general utility, are subject to this deadening paralysis. It is first necessary to apply to the mayor and his council, who, if they approve the plan, forward the petition to the subprefect and his council, where the matter is again discussed, and if approved, the scheme is forwarded to the prefect and his council, who in due time, after mature deliberation, pass their opinion on the proposed change, and forward the application to the minister of the interior, who in turn examines its merits, and if he finds any error, or unintelligible clause in the petition, sends it back, to begin its journey over again; if not, he submits it to the king in council, where it is either sanctioned or condemned. In either case, it is again sent back through the labyrinth of the Minister, the Prefect, the Sub-Prefect, the Mayor, &c. to the petitioning individual, who, if he should happen to be alive at the end of the two, or three, or four years elapsed since his scheme went out on its tour, has permission to --put a window in a church-to throw a bridge over a rivulet-or to plant a tree on a promenade!

It is this complication of difficulties, entangling every attempt at local improvement in this country, that deters rich proprietors and enlightened capitalists from forming themselves into companies for the accomplishment of any particular work. The labour is so disproportioned to the end, and the procrastination so discouraging, that they turn their attention from objects of general utility and local embellishment to the dissipations of society, the charms of literature, or the fascinations of the theatre. Where would have been the greatness and glory of England today, if her government had imposed similar restraints on the spirit of association among her subjects? Where would have been her roads and canals; her noble public charities and her hospitals; her banks; her companies of insurance—her commerce—her manufactures, and her agriculture?

The governmental discouragement of the spirit of private association for purposes of public good, is not less strikingly manifest in Paris than in the provincial towns. Societies for the purpose of protecting individuals against casualties which can

neither be foreseen nor prevented, are extremely rare. Insurance on lives, and against the risk of fire, are only just beginning to establish themselves. The good people of Paris are content to drink even/at this day the water of the Seine, after it has passed through the city, and become always clouded, and sometimes putrid with filth! In this state it is raised by machinery for the supply of the few large fountains that adorn the city. It is not conducted into the houses by pipes, but carried through the streets in hogsheads, on hand-carts, and distributed to purchasers at a sous a bucket, which is four times higher than in London. It is ascertained that Paris might be supplied with water from the Yuette at an expense of about a million and a half of dollars;-and yet, under what is called a paternal government, whilst vast sums are squandered to celebrate the fete of St. Louis, or the marriage of a prince; or to erect water works over the heights of Marly to animate the fountains of Versailles, not a sous is appropriated to supply the metropolis with the first necessary of life. Bonaparte being fond of great undertakings, attempted to conduct the waters of the Beuvronne and Ourg to Paris, and expended about four and a half millions of dollars without accomplishing it. Since his abdication, this enterprize has been suspended. Twelve millions of dollars are yet necessary to complete it. A company of Englishmen offered to advance that sum about four years ago, and finish the works, but the jealous vanity of this government rejected their proposals. They offered to leave the fountains of Paris as they now stand; to adorn the city with new ones, as well as to conduct the water into every house, and asked no other reward than the privilege of selling water at the present price to those who chose to buy it, until their capital, and the legal interest on it, should be reimbursed. The principal motive of this company for making the proposal, was to give employment to the iron works in England, and therefore they were to furnish the tubes or pipes of their own manufacture. Hence arose a variety of difficulties and jealous suspi-

cions in the minds of the municipal authorities, for it was necessary to consult the prefect of the Seine—the general council of Paris—the director of bridges and highways—the engineers who were called in—the owners of forges—and lastly, the grand supervising corps, the royal council. Such security, how-

over, was given by the company for the fulfilment of their engagement, as seemingly allayed suspicion, and a contract was nearly completed, when the government suddenly imagined they would be able, in time, to do the work themselves, and ordered the Moniteur to announce, with a triumphant flourish of "pleasure," that the rumour of the proposed contract with an English company was entirely without foundation! The agent attempted in vain to contradict this assertion. The censors rejected his paragraph, and he consequently remitted back the funds to England. The owners of the forges in France, soon afterwards declared it would not be in their power to furnish more than one fourth of the necessary pipes in four years, and a second English company then offered to buy that one fourth of them, and to furnish the remainder themselves. They also offered to cut the two canals of St. Denis and St. Martin, which would save two days in the navigation of the Seine from Rouen to Paris, with the vast expense of horses now incurred by the six hundred boats that annually ascend this river, and also to build magnificent commercial magazines on their banks. But the government again refused, and thus deprived the labouring class in Paris of employment to the amount of twelve millions of dollars! To those whose imaginations are fond of magnifying the advantages of despotic power, and the great works it occasionally performs, it may be worth while to remark, that a single company of Englishmen offered to expend on these water works, in four years, nearly three times as much as Napoleon laid out on them during the fourteen years of his absolute domination! Had the vast treasures, which the Emperor squandered away in his schemes of mad ambition, been appropriated to the internal embellishment of France, how different would have been his fortunes, and how much nobler the halo of glory which would have environed his memory in the eyes of posterity!

The internal communication between the departments of France is so defective, that two thirds of their productions are supposed to be valueless for the want of canals. There are not more than twenty canals at present in this country, and seven hundred and fifty are supposed necessary for completing the internal communication,* Some great shew canals, which have

* Delaborde, p. 375.

cost much, and yield little, have tended to discourage similar undertakings. The industry of many provinces is half paralysed and their trade half stagnant, in consequence of the expense of transportation, arising from the want of short canals, on which the labour of one horse would be equal to that of fifty on a road, and the labour of one man to that of twenty. The immense impulse which the industry of England has derived from the introduction of canals within the last forty years, is incalculable; and in France the effect, might be still greater. The saving in the article of fuel alone would amount to several millions of dollars annually, for more than forty of the departments are ascertained to have coal mines,* which, if worked, would give ten millions of acres, now in wood, to cultivation.

The proudest monument of the reign of Louis XIV. is the famous canal of Languedoc, which is only about one hundred and eighty miles long; cost somewhat upwards of two millions of dollars; and was completed in fifteen years. Now the friends of legitimacy, perhaps, can scarcely believe the fact, that this, gigantic effort of that superb monarch, is surpassed by the single state of New-York, which did not contain one third the population of Paris at the beginning of the French revolution, and does not contain twice as many as this capital at present. The Union Canal, which is now opening from Lake Erie to the Hudson, will be twice as long as that of Languedoc, and, according to appearances, will be completed in five years from its commencement.

The doing every thing by the hand of government, and allowing nothing to be done by societies of private individuals, is also the cause of the bad condition of the roads in France. There are eight and twenty grand highways, it is true, diverging like the radii of a circle from Paris towards the frontiers, and about ninety lesser roads, that intersect these in different parts of the kingdom. These great roads are sixty feet wide; nearly straight; bordered by two or four rows of elms, and free from tolls. They are paved in the centre to the breadth of two carriages; the sides are in the worst imaginable state; and the entire length of all the roads in France is estimated at about thirty thousand miles.— The by-roads are made by individuals, and the defect in

* Delaborde.

the municipal organization, which I have already mentioned, causes them to be so neglected, that in some of the provinces they are passable only on horseback. Now, in England the roads are only twenty-four feet wide; the face of the country is intersected by upwards of a thousand of them, measuring altogether about one hundred thousand miles, and all kept in excel-

getter about one number thousand miles, and all kept in excellent order. It is observed by the Abbe Raynal, that if in travelling through a country, you do not find facile communications between cities and towns, nay villages and hamlets, you may pronounce the people barbarous; and you can only be deceived in the degree of their barbarism. If the French admit the correctness of this criterion, they must certainly surrender all pretensions to being the most civilized people on the globe.

Prior to the middle of the last century, the roads of England were likewise excessively bad, and the public carriages clumsy machines, imported principally from France.* Persons are yet living who remember the first establishment of post-chaises in that kingdom; and the mails were not carried in carriages till the year after the close of the American war.† To English and American travellers, the unwieldy clumsiness of the French diligences, till within the last year or two, was a matter of astonishment; nor was it till last spring, (1819) that heavy chariots were substituted in the place of the hideous tumbril calificities, in which the mails were previously transported. These changes alone have accelerated more than one third the average travelling of the public vehicles throughout the kingdom, and a further improvement will no doubt take place, when the roads are kept in. better order, and more attention paid to the breeding of coach horses, and the keeping them in good condition.

Instead of wagons, the French use prodigiously long carts, with nuts jutting out far enough for war chariots, and constructed altogether as rudely as if the model had been preserved from the times of the Crusades. The boast of a Frenchman, however, is the dexterity with which these beast-torturing maehines, of thirty to forty feet in length, are balanced, and the facility with which the conductor attaches some of the tandem horses behind, to prevent the cart running too fast down hill.

* Creech's Letters on the Statistics of Seotland.

† Anderson, vol. iv. p. 54.

But the general enlargement of intelligence which is taking place in this country, promises to remove, before long, the relics of barbarism observable in all the utensils of agriculture and manufactures. From the acceleration which the establishment of the society of arts and manufactures gave to the progress of the mechanical arts in Great Britain, we may conjecture the effects of a similar institution, and of the conservatoire des arts et metiers, on the industry of France. In this latter establishment at Paris are already deposited the models of all the best instruments and machines used in France, and a very considerable advantage has resulted to the nation from it. The Duc de la Rochefaucault-Liancourt, who introduced vaccination, together with numerous improvements in manufactures. as well as in the management of hospitals and prisons, is the director-general of a council of learned and rich manufacturers. attached to this establishment. It is not improbable that this institution will, at no remote era, be converted into an academy of the mechanical arts, for the instruction of classes of young men in the practice as well as the theory of the useful arts.-Such an academy would, by distributing over the kingdom a knowledge of the best models of buildings and machines, as well s all improvements in manufactures known in foreign countries, become a source of incalculable benefit to the nation, and would be, in fact, what Delaborde calls an Encyclopædia in action.

I have now probably said enough to give you an idea of the capital defects of the municipal system of France. You are not to conclude, however, from their grossness, that the whole system of government is bad; nor to discredit their existence because the national industry is prosperous in spite of them. In physics, the natural buoyancy of a body may be such, that it will float even under the incumbrance of unnecessary weights; so in politics, the natural spirit of enterprize may be such in a community as to cause the arts to flourish under the burthen of unnecessary restraints. But if the industry of France can be shown (as it unquestionably can,) to have made prodigious progress of late under these onerous restrictions, what must have been the cramps and oppressions that smothered her abilities under the old regime?—under that system of laws which denied to females the exercise of any trade; which refused foreigners, no matter what might be their accomplishments, the same privilege till after a new apprenticeship of ten years; which prevented boys from beginning an apprenticeship under fifteen years of age; and that condemned them to ten years service before they could set up for themselves, and then obliged them to work at it exactly as their masters had taught them.

"Freedom," says Gibbon, "is the first step to curiosity and knowledge;" and in proportion as the government of this country becomes free, the restraints on private enterprize will gradually disappear; and the government will discover that individuals can generally walk best alone, without the constant aid of official crutches. No country on earth abounds in the *agrémens* of life like France; and how infinitely delightful then will she become, when her municipal administration shall have attained the perfection of that of England or of America—when private societies shall be encouraged to incorporate themselves for the advancement of public good; and capital come forth with confidence from its hiding places, to improve and embellish the country?

Agriculture was formerly neglected in France because the land was held by usufructaries, who had no permanent interest in the soil; by Seigneurs who lived on the bounty of the king, and who neglected their estates to solicit favours at court; and by a Bourgeoisie oppressed by taxation and without capital to improve their possessions. The prohibition of the exportation of grain, and the internal duties, or octrois, paid on entering the towns, were additional discouragements to the farmer, who was besides condemned under the old regime to lie idle about twenty-eight days in the year in honour of the Saints. By doubling the number of proprietors, the revolution gave a great impulse to agricultural industry, and by doing away with a superstitious reverence for old systems of cultivation, it prepared the owners of land for the adoption of better methods. Improvements, perhaps, extend more slowly in husbandry than in any other art, because communication is less easy in the country than in towns, and because practical men look with much incredulity on all innovations. Thus it happened that although the advantage of a rotation of crops, or the introduction of a leguminous between

two grain crops was known the in French Flanders before the revolution, the peasants and cultivators of the soil in France adhered almost invariably to the impoverishing three field system of wheat, oats, and pasture which had been consecrated by custom. Artificial meadows likewise were unknown, until within these last thirty years, and the flourishing flocks and improved fields which now abound in those districts where they are introduced, are a convincing evidence of the good they have done, It would require a treatise on husbandry to point out all the late improvements in agriculture, and yet it still remains very imperfect in France. From a few facts, however, you may form some conjecture of the changes. The agricultural produce of the kingdom is admitted to have increased a fourth since the revolution. Potatoes have been introduced, and the kingdom now produces annually more than twenty millions of hectolitres. The cultivation of woad and of beets for sugar is also new and great acquisition to the country. The beet is a planted in spring, and the tops which are left on the earth about the middle of autumn are said to augment the ensuing grain crop more than a tenth.

In consequence of a difficulty of separating the colouring particles of woad from the remains of the plant, which made two hundred pounds only equal to one of indigo, its cultivation was neglected in France, after the importation of the latter, about the close of the sixteenth century. But as indigo could not be procured during the late war, the chemists turned their attention to that difficulty, and a method of separating the colours, as from the anil in America was discovered, which caused the cultivation to be resumed. The vineyards in France have increased a fourth* since the revolution; they cover upwards of one million six hundred thousand hectares of land, (about four millions of English acres) and yield, on an average, about thirty-six millions of hectolitres of wine, t one sixth of which is distilled into brandy; and the whole is valued at about an hundred and fifty millions of dollars. The quantity of vegetable oil is likewise greatly increased, and the present produce in that article is valued at fourteen millions of dollars. In 1789 France imported annually one hundred and thirty thousand dollars worth of madder more than

* Chaptal. + About twenty-six gallons each.

46

she exported; and now exports that hundred and thirty thousand dollars more of it than she imports. The quantity of flax and hemp produced at present in France, is valued at ten millions of dollars, but I have not the means of saying in what proportion. it has increased. The flocks of sheep have been greatly improved of late years, owing to the greater care that has been taken of them since the introduction of merinos, which happened a little before the revolution. This race now yields near a million of kilogrammes of raw wool, out of the thirty-five millions produced in the kingdom; the whole of which is valued at sixteen millions of dollars. The importation of silk into France has somewhat diminished since 1789, but the quantity produced at home is not much augmented. There is waste land enough in the kingdom, which if planted with the mulberry, would render importation unnecessary, although this is now equal to the preduction, and the whole amounts to ten millions of kilogrammes, valued at six millions of dollars. France produces more than fifty millions of hectolitres of wheat; thirty of rye, thirty-two of oats, twelve of barley, eight of buckwheat, six of maize, and one of other grains, being about a fourth more than she produced thirty years ago.*

These facts, which I have drawn partly from the statistical returns to the minister of the interior, and partly from Chaptal, may give you some idea of the increase of agricultural industry in this country since the revolution. Yet it is very correctly observed by Delaborde that not a quarter of the land is cultivated as it should be with a fixed rotation of crops; and that there

• The *Mètre* is the fundamental unit of the new French weights and measures. It is the ten millioneth part of the distance from the pole to the equator, and is equal to 39.383 inches English. A *Litre* is a deci-mètre cube; equal to 6f:083 inches, which is more than the wine and less than the beer quart. A *Gramme* is the weight of a centi-mètre cube of distilled water, and equals 22,966 grains English. An *Are* is 100 square mètres, and equals 119.68 square yards. The *Stere* is one cubic mètre and is used for wood. The words Deca, Hecto, Kilo, and Myria, prefixed to either of those denominations, signifies respectively 10, 100, 1000, and 10,000, measures of it. The words Deci, Centi, and Milli, on the contrary, when prefixed, signify a tenth, an hundredth, or a thousandth part of the Mètre, the Litre, the Gramme, the Are, or the Stere. The Kilo-mètre (100) mètres) is the uew French mile. The Hectolitre (100 litres) is most used for capacity. The Hectare (100 ares) for land; and the Kilo-gramme (1000 grammes) for weight. is mot in France, a fourth of the animals which the soil is capable of nourishing.* The perfection of a system of agriculture consists in the general cultivation of the soil; in a judicious rotatation of crops; in the beauty of the races of domestic animals; and in the use of the best labour-saving machines. France has already nearly attained the first, but is very deficient in the other three requisites. "Elle a tout ce que le travail peut procurer, et rien de ce que les lamières ajoutent au travail." The annual average produce of land in France is five and a half dollars; and the average rent is not three dollars, whilst that of England where the climate and soil are inferior, is near seven.1 In trawelling through France one is surprised by the inferiority of her agriculture to that of Flanders and Italy, or of Bavaria and Switzerland. The contrast between the Austrian and French Flanders struck Arthur Young; and Dr. Moore mentions a female he met with on the eastern frontier of France who expressed infinite astonishment that the Swiss, although heretics, had better cultivated farms than their neighbours, the French, although these were bons catholiques. In England, even at this day, there exists a relic of the ancient prejudice against machinery from the specious apprehension of its ruining the poorer classes by diminishing the demand for labour. In Staffordshire, and the vale of Gloucester, I have seen the farmers ploughing with five horses tandem and two drivers, although it can be demonstrated that three horses abreast are more powerful. A farmer near Cheltenham once told me he would consent to adopt the latter plan, if it were not for the impossibility of doing so without causing one horse to tread on the ploughed land! So ignorant was a cultivator of the soil, in that rich country, of one of the simplest contrivances of art. Habit has engendered prejudices in many societies which the first convictions of reason cannot extirpate. The greatest agriculturist in the world once related to me a fact in confirmation of this stupid adherence in England to ancient customs. He had gone down, he observed, into the west of England, on a visit to a nobleman, and during his stay, availed

* In 1812 there were in France (proper) upwards of two millions of horses and mules, about seven millions of cattle, two and a half millions of asses, thirty millions of sheep, four millions of hogs, and fifty-two millions of fowls.

4

himself of every opportunity of conversing with the tenants. The practice of ploughing with a long string of horses and two conductors struck him as peculiarly absurd, and he one-day asked an intelligent farmer, whether, if he were shown the art of ploughing as much land with one man and two horses, as he now ploughed with two men and five horses, he would consent to adopt it? The farmer declared that he would, and in consequence, the gentleman ordered his agent in Norfolk to send a plough and pair of horses about two hundred miles to the borders of Wales. The new plan was prodigiously admired at first, and the gentleman returned home with a hope that he had introduced this innovation in the west. At the next session of parliament, however, he had the mortification to learn that the improvement had been rejected on two reasons being discovered against it-one by the ploughman, that it was not sociable to plough alone, and one by the farmer, that as a certain number of horses were necessary on a farm they ought to be exercised!

In France the prejudice against innovation is still more inveterate, both because the farmers are a more ignorant class of men, and because there prevails here a national vanity which disposes many to think their system perfect. When the Duke of Clarence visited the mint in Paris, he asked one of its officers if they did not use the *pompe à feu*, or steam engine to move the stamps or dice, "Dieu merci monseigneur," replied the officer, "nous avons en France assez de bras pour nous passer de machines."

The race of cattle in France is a very indifferent one both for the dairy and the market. The show beeves in Paris this year for mardi gras were greatly inferior in symmetry of form as well as weight to the heavy oxen of England, of America, or Tuscany. The want of hedges in France prevents the cattle from grazing, and I do not remember to have seen one fine herd in this kingdom, except at Ville Franche, on the banks of the Saone, where there exists a peculiarly beautiful race of white, or nankeen cattle, resembling in size and figure the Holkham Devons in England. How much better employed might Napoleon have been during the last four years of his reign, in scattering that race of cattle over France, than in planting his eagles on the Escurial and the Kremlin.

. 💇

Except the light horses of Limousin, and these of Normandy, which resemble in form the English and New Jersey coach horses, those of France are generally a sturdy and tough, but ugly race. They are vigorous and vicious when well fed, but hard usage generally tames their spirit, so that the post boy not unfrequently dismounts at a hill, and walks up it, tying his whip, and leaving his horses pretty much to their own discretion. The French horses are much improved of late years, but are still slower than the English. In posting one seldom makes more on an average through the day than a post (upwards of four and a half miles English) an hour. Our horses in America, though not so well groomed as those of England, have more heart and capacity. Nothing is more common in the United States than to meet a man on horseback from the western country, who has travelled with the same horse fifty miles a day, for twelve or fifteen days together; and a hackney coach in the streets of Baltimore or Philadelphia will contract to travel forty or forty-five miles a day for a week. Now in England, where the roads are smooth and beautiful, you cannot find a coachman (much less a hackney coachman) who would consent to drive more than about thirty miles a day for ten days; and in Paris the owner of the best horses will not engage to take you in a remise (much less a fiaere) more than twenty-five miles a day for several days in succession. The Italian vetturinos. and the Swiss or French voituriers, scarcely go out of a walk, nor travel more than twenty-five miles a day, although they set out before it is light in the morning. Whether the hot stables of Europe debilitate the constitutions of the horses; or whether those animals here are capable of enduring less fatigue from want of practice; or whether the maize and abundant food in America invigorate them; or whether the free use of their limbs in our fields when young, endows them with greater flexibility and vigour of body, I cannot pretend to determine,

The breed of hogs in France has been improved, but is still a long legged, rawboned race of animals, bearing about the same resemblance to the English and American hog, that the greyhound does to the New-Foundland cur. Yet according to Buffon animals degenerate in the western hemisphere! The French king could not confer a greater service on his country in the article of provision than by bringing over that fine breed at Holk. ham, which is a cross of the wild boar of Naples and the Sullolk pig of England.

Notwithstanding the great improvements in farming utensils since the revolution, they are still very rule in France. In Champagne and in Burgundy, the harrow teeth are of wood, and the ploughs are as ill-constructed as any I ever beheld, except in the ecclesiastical states. The Freeborn plough has, however, been recently imported from New-York, and has excited attention. Unfortunately, there never did exist in France a class of men corresponding with that of gentlemen farmers in England and America. One of the disadvantages of the late political fluctuations has been, an unbounded wish to invest funds in land as a solid security. Hence there is but little floating capital to improve the soil, and the importance of improvement is not understood. Delaborde excited some surprise here, when he stated that the English farmer is a man of the world, "who dresses in the fashion; drinks tea in the morning; visits his fields on horseback; has an office for transacting business; criticises Arthur Young; fox-hunts in the winter, makes his daughters learn music, and meddles in elections."

Every year, however, extends the progress of rural economy in France; and as soon as the municipal organization of the kingdom shall give a proper encouragement to the spirit of private association, its advance will be incalculable. Good machinery and an improved system of husbandry might double the produce of agriculture in a few years. The substitution of coal for wood, as fuel, will bring a large body of land, perhaps a sixteenth of the kingdom, into cultivation.*

Agricultural societies are establishing themselves throughout the country, for the purpose of collecting and disseminating

The superficies of France contains fifty-two millions of hectares, or about one hundred and thirty millions of English acres, as the acre is to the hectare nearly as two to five. Less than one half is *arable* land—two sixteenths are in wood—two in rocks, mountains, rivers, roads, and promenades—one sixteenth in pasturage one in heath or common—one in meadow—half a sixteenth in vineyards—one third of a sixteenth in orchards and kitchen gardens—one fourth of a sixteenth in particular cultivation. One fourth of a sixteenth, or one sixty-fourth part may be thus divided; Thirty parts in ponds and marshes—seventeen in houses—eight in hops, hemp, and willows—three in olives—more than one in gardens snd parks three in nurseries, turf, and canals—and two in quarries and mines. knowledge. Mn Decares formed a Conneil of Husbanday, for the purpose of making, in conjunction with the agricultural sorcistics in the departments, a course of experiments to discover the mode of cultivation best suited to the nature of the soil and local oircumstances of each particular district. For a similar purpose of experiment, and for breeding the best races of damestic animals, he proposed the establishment of large experimental farms. The king acquiesced in this scheme of his minister; but its execution has, like most projects for the advancement of the public good in this country, been pestponed. Whilst millions are wasted to swell the pomp of monarchy, the first central farm near Paris, which is merely *leased*, cannot begin its_ operations for a year or two to come.

One of the first changes recommended by the Council of Agriculture, was the substitution of pits instead of granaries, for the preservation of grain against weevil. They state that pits, dug in a dry soil, and defended by the precautions necessary to. prevent humidity, are used in Spain and Italy, and that they are, found to preserve the grain against decay or alteration for many years. Public nurseries of fruit trees have been established in: many of the departments; and the seeds of several of our fine forest trees in America have been also planted in them, since the publication of Michaux's splendid work on this subject. М. Decazes caused cattle to be purchased in Switzerland and distributed among the departments, and he offered prizes for the handsomest specimens that may be annually produced of the new race. He also sent three naturalists abroad, one to Madagascar, one to St. Thomas, and one to the Philippine Islands, to examine the agriculture, commerce, and arts of these people, and; bring into France whatever might be imagined useful. Travellers too have been sent into different countries of Europe, to ascertain what systems of cultivation it may be advantageous to adopt in France. In the last address of M. Decazes to the king, he states that some pigs, of a superior kind, have been recently imported from England. If the choice has been judiciously made, we may hope that in a few years the French farmers will get rid of the present race, which not unfrequently call to mind the spectres in Pharoah's dream.

Although France has made great improvements of late years in rural economy, I do not think any judicious agriculturist, who has observed the rudeness of her farming machinery—the abundance of indigenous weeds which spring up with every crop on the ground—the unskilful rotation of crops even yet adhered to, the want of capital, and consequently of stock and manure, can think me extravagant, in having asserted that the produce of the land of the kingdom might be doubled in a few years. Suppose, for example, that the fertility of the soil were properly husbanded by a judicious succession of white and green crops, instead of being exhausted, as it now is, by perpetual aration, and that half the expense of cultivation were saved by the adoption of the best machinery, what would be the consequence of these changes alone?*

The introduction of artificial grasses and of leguminous crops into a country, is of an importance which no one, who has not contrasted the condition of a nation before and after their adoption, can duly estimate. The fertilizing effects of artificial grasses are immense. In Lombardy, the produce of one acre of grass, is considered equal to two of grain. Indeed, so beautifully irrigated is all that superb valley, that three fourths of the land is kept constantly in grass, which is usually cut four times a year, and manured once in two or three years. The Lombard farmers have adopted a twenty years' rotation—fifteen in grass—one in hemp and legumes—one in oats—one in wheat and legumes—one in maize, and one in wheat. According to Chateauvieux, the gross revenue of a farm in Lombardy was, (before that country fell under the withering dominion of Austria,) about fifty-two French dollars the arpent, or about thirty-nine

* The profits of agriculture, and the fisheries in Great Britain, are near

As prices are at least one third higher in England,	219	millions sterling.
deduct one third,	73	mil.
```	146	•
The profits of agriculture in France, are near	195	millions
But as there is nearly twice as much cultivated land in		
France as in Great Britain, deduct	95	mil.
Therefore, the same quantity of land that produces	100	millions in France,
yields in Great Britain (with the fisheries,)	146	millions.

This must arise entirely from the mode of cultivation, as the soil and elimate here are better.

**865** 

the English acre. Money is more valuable in Italy than in France, and the hectare is about double the arpent, yet there are but five departments in France, the average *nett* produce of whose soil is estimated by Chaptal at ten French dollars the hectare.

But if there be any country in Europe in which a judicious rotation of white and green crops has worked miracles, in vanquishing the sterility of the soil, and the unfavourableness of the climate, it is Scotland. We are informed by Lord Kaimes, that till within the last fifty years, (with the exception of small patches of wheat and barley,) oats, peas, and bear or pig, were cultivated in that country; and I have known a Scotchman in America, so retentive of national phraseology, as to call a field of three hundred acres a wheat patch. At that time the Scotch. roads were nearly impassable for wheel carriages; the grain was carried to market on horseback; the ploughs were drawn by oxen and horses together, or sometimes by ten or twelve oxen; the weeds in the fields contended for supremacy with the grain; the cattle often perished in the winter for the want of provender: peas and oat meal were the chief articles of food; and butcher's meat but seldom appeared on the tables of tradesmen or farmers. Who, let me ask, that has only rolled in a post-chaise over the fine roads that now intersect the Lowlands of Scotland: who has observed the luxuriant crops of grain that now wave on her fields; the fat herds which low in her meadows, and the snowy flocks which bleat over her hills, could imagine that such had been her condition before the middle of the last century. I have been informed, that when the present president of the Agricultural society, Sir John Sinclair, was sent to college, there were not as many turnips in the whole kingdom of Scotland, as are now grown on a single farm. Small's plough, which saved half the labour of ploughing, was only discovered about that time. In truth, the internal improvement of North Britain may be dated from the establishment of the Highland society for the promotion of agriculture about the year 1784. The great defect of a rotation of crops, was soon after discovered to be a succession of two culmiferous crops, without the intervention of a leguminous, or a grass one. Turnips and clover were consequently introduced, and consecutive corn crops abolished. By this means, poor soils were soon found to justify the expense of

47

cultivation, and the fertility of rich ones so increased as to double the agricultural produce of the country. One acre in artificial grass, supported more stock than twenty had, in a natural state; turnips and hay supplied them abundantly during winter, and the increased quantity of manure still adds every year to the vigour of the soil. The Lothians are, for their extent, probably the best cultivated parts of Great Britain; and in no part of the united kingdom does land rent as high. I have seen at Mr. Rene's, crops of oats and wheat almost equal to those of the Genessee country. In September, 1818, he told me that his crops of wheat and oats would probably yield him respectively, I think, thirty-five and eighty bushels to (I believe,) the English acre, which is somewhat less that the Scotch. His crop of clover was luxuriant, but very inferior to those produced by the miraculous action of plaster of Paris on the soil of the United States. The humidity of the atmosphere, and the proximity of the soil to the ocean, might probably neutralize the nutritive properties of the plaster; yet I endeavored in vain to prevail on some of those farmers to try it. There is no reason to believe, however, that it would not act generally in France, and more than double the value of land here as it has in America. The only experiment with gypsum which, to my knowledge, has been tried in Great Britain, was one made by the great commoner Mr. Coke, in the early part of last year. He used four bushels to the acre, (four times more than we deem necessary,) and the effect, when he pointed out the field to me last July, was distinctly visible. Now there is no soil in England on which, seemingly, it would be less likely to act than on that of Holkham, situated on the margin of the German sea, and exposed to frequent North East gales, saturated of course with marine acid. since till they reach Mr. Coke's, they do not touch any land after leaving the country of "his next door neighbour, the king of Denmark."

As I have called your attention so particularly to the progress which rural economy is making in France, I cannot refrain from adding some remarks on the wonderful consequences of a new system of cultivation, which has been pursued for many years by the Mecænas of agriculture, the great good man I have just named. It was a remark of Charles II. that the county of Norfolk was only fit to be cut up into roads for the rest of the kingdom; and much of it was actually so sterile forty years ago, that it was thought incapable of producing corn. I had heard much in the other parts of England of the beautiful husbandry of Norfolk, and had thoughtlessly fancied that it was a district, in which art and industry had brought the cultivation of a fertile soil to perfection. My surprise at finding the soil naturally barren, increased as I approached Holkham. Perhaps nothing contributes more to give an affluent air to the face of a country than close compact hedges, and my disappointment arose, as well from finding those of Norfolk thin and ragged from the poverty of the soil, as from the appearance of the drilled grain which never exhibits that smooth level surface of heads, which I had hitherto imagined the surest indication of an exuberant cron. I had just returned, too, from the south of Europe, where, as in America, the warmth of the climate gives greater luxuriance to the straw of grain than it attains in England. From a few facts however, you may observe the advantage of a good over a bad system of husbandry.

Mr. Coke inherited the estate of Holkham from the Earls of Leicester, about the beginning of the American war, and his Norfolk Agricultural Society met, for the first time, on, I believe, the day of the declaration of our independence. At that time the rental of the whole estate was only £2.200, a sum considerably less than that which he now derives from the clipping alone of the wood he has planted. Parts of the estate were then let, tythe-free, at three shillings the acre, and the whole was thought too poor to grow grain. The drill system of cultivation, once recommended by Tull, had never been in vogue; yet Mr. Coke determined to make an experiment of drilled grain. It succeeded beyond expectation; and subsequent experience convinced him of its great superiority over the broad-cast system. Sir J. Sinclair, who had in his code of agriculture, expressed a belief that there was something radically wrong in the drill system, went, for the first time, to Holkham last summer; and, after minute examination, recanted his opinion, and admitted its su-Mr. Coke's rotation of crops is this-first, turnipsperiority. second, barley, laid down with clover or cocksfoot grass-third year, and sometimes the fourth, grass and hay-and the fourth

or the fifth, wheat. He drills his turnips on ridges, twenty-seven inches apart, and works them lengthways with the plough, and crossways with the hand-hoe. In September the crop conceals entirely the surface of the earth. He drills his wheat in rows, nine inches asunder, sowing four bushels to the acre, and works it in the spring with a machine which loosens the earth and destroys the weeds. It is drilled, twelve rows at a time, by a machine about nine feet wide, and drawn by two horses. The same machine makes the drill; carries the manure, (oil-cake,) and empties it into the drills through tin horns, which receive it from little cups on a revolving cylinder; it also covers the manure; drops the wheat over it by smaller cups and horns, and then covers the wheat. I saw fields of wheat at Holkham, which were estimated at twelve coombs (forty-eight bushels) the acre, and fields of barley at twenty coombs. Mr. C. shewed me a field, about the crop on which, a few years since, there existed a very great diversity of opinion among his visitors. To gratify the curiosity of, I think, Lord Grey, the field was measured and the crop cleaned immediately after its removal. The produce was fifty-seven and a half bushels per acre.

These details are sufficient to give you an idea of the immense improvement in agriculture which has taken place in the county of Norfolk, and the results, I think, justify the opinion of that great philanthropist, that if the same methods were adopted throughout the kingdom, England might become a grain exporting country. Mr. C. justly considers annual leases as fatal to good husbandry, and is convinced that the true interest of the landlord and the tenant are the same. He, therefore, gives long and liberal leases; and has proved by experience that large farms properly managed, are not only the most profitable, but even more encouraging to population and the real comforts of the poorer classes. The farm which he cultivates himself gives employment to all the inhabitants of the parish of Holkham. The population of this parish is now four times greater than when he took possession of the estate; and I saw no peasantry in England so neatly dressed, so comfortably lodged, or so respectful in their manners. When he went to reside at Holkham the morals of these now industrious happy people were like the morals of the same class in other parts of England; but although there are

seven or eight hundred persons in that parish, there has not been for the last thirty years a presentment by a grand jury against one individual.

Such is the progress of agriculture in Norfolk that the stock has become the best in the kingdom. The South Down sheep are preferred by Mr. Coke; and his Holkham Devon cattle are proverbially beautiful. In his opinion the Devon breed, when put in good condition, require less food, give more butter, though less milk, make a greater quantity of good beef at a less expense, and are more active under the yoke than any other race. They took the prizes last year at his annual sheep shearing, which is in fact a sort of agricultural fète of three days, for the purpose of exhibiting the state and system of hushandry at Holkham, and during which this distinguished patriot entertains with princely magnificence several hundred British and foreign agriculturists, and distributes prizes in plate to the value of two hundred guineas. The days which I passed at Holkham, after the crowd had retired, I shall ever class among the most gratifying of my life, so sublime and beautiful is the moral spectacle which that estate exhibits. It is not the splendour of his princely mansion, and the sumptuous elegance of his hospitality, and the courteous kindness of his manners, that alone attract and command your admiration; for in these he may be perhaps equalled by others. It is the benevolence of his heart which is commensurate with human existence: it is that settled rapture of mind with which he contemplates the happiness he dispenses to thousands; it is the reciprocal affection between him and every thing around him; the glorious devotion of his independent tenantry, and the noble gratitude of his contented labourers; it is the entire absence of poverty and vice from the scene in which he moves and has his being; it is these which cheer and exhibite the heart of the beholder, and exalt his respect for human nature. May we not then indulge the hope that the time is not very remote when this scene will not stand alone and unparalleled in Europe; when that illustrious patriarch shall find many to copy, some to emulate, and none to envy him?

As the drill system of agriculture with its judicious rotation of crops succeeds so admirably on poor land, there can be little doubt of its producing a prodigious augmentation in the productions of a richer soil. It makes its way, however, over that

intelligent kingdom but slowly, for Mr. Coke does not think it travels or radiates more than a mile a year; so that the farmers of Cheshire and Shropshire, for example, and many others, are not yet convinced of the advantage of reaping forty or fifty bushels an acre from their land, instead of sixteen which is now its average product. Wherever Mr. Coke's method has been introduced it has been found to create so great a demand for labour, as to break up those nests of vice and wretchedness, the parish poor houses. Perhaps it is justly stated by Malthus that the English system of poor laws is "an evil, in comparison with which, the national debt with all its magnitude of terror, is of little moment." That system in its perversion has not only taken away in a great degree the stimulus to labour, but by breaking down the spirit of independence, and extinguishing the sensibility of shame in the peasantry, it has become the moral leprosy of England. A system of husbandry, therefore, which could root out this demoralizing evil would be, as.a moral vaccine alone, of infinite advantage to that kingdom; and the adoption of such an one in France would not only prevent this government from resorting to any similar expedient as a relief to indigence, but would add inconceivably to the strength of the government, as well as to the prosperity of the nation. Why then does not the king of France invite men, familiar with this system, into his kingdom; and why does he suffer his agriculturists to go on in the old beaten routine, since he must have re. sided long enough in England to learn that consecutive white grain crops, will exhaust any soil? He has certainly read enough to discover that the only chance which monarchy has of maintaining itself in Europe, is by endeavouring to emulate liberty in the blessings which it confers on nations. Without a zeal of that kind among kings, their authority will soon be discovered to be as useless as the lofty aqueducts of the ancients now are, to nations acquainted with the principles of hydrostatics.

The general division of the great estates of France has given an immense impulse to agricultural industry, and the forced division of property by the testamentary law has been hitherto very serviceable in diminishing the space which separated the rich from the poor. It is yet a problem, however, in French politics whether that law, though very equitable, may not in its turn check the prosperity of the nation, since large farms are found to be most profitable when cultivation approaches perfection. That it will undermine the foundations of the social system of France there can be little doubt, nor is it yet ascertained here whether an equal division of property may not be as injurious to children as to parents. "Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable." Perhaps when estates are thus divided each child may expect to live as its parents lived, and hence may arise a ruinous prodigality; for that style which was justified by a whole fortune may be wasteful and extravagant when to be supported by a part of it. An overheated ambition to keep up appearances, to excel their neighbours in fine furniture, and to live in a style out of proportion to their means, may not only break up and squander away all large estates in three or four generations, but destroy simplicity of manners and all contentment with condition. It may become a great misfortune for young men to be reared with ideas above their circumstances. and to inherit just enough property to prevent enterprize and make them idle, without justifying an expenditure commensurate with their imagined necessities. A vulgar affectation of independence may come to characterize the behaviour of young Frenchmen, and a spirit of violent dissipation to vitiate their tastes and moral habits. Let us cherish the hope, however, that these apprehensions may prove groundless, and that the same admirable and salutary effects which have hitherto resulted from that law, may continue to flow from it.

Note. As the first part of this letter treats of the municipal system of France, it may not be improper, in confirmation of its suggestions, to compare the expense of collecting the taxes in England with that in France, from which the reader will observe the advantage of banks and freer regulations, whence the difference, in part, arises; ENGLAND-Customs, 7 per cent.-Excise, 4-Recording and Stamps, 7-Post Office, 11-Lotteries-Direct Taxes, 2-Total 31. FRANCE-Customs, 33-Excise, 20-Recording and Stamps, 9-Post Office, 45-Lotteries, 30-Direct Taxes, 15-Total 152. See Esprit des Associations, p. 581.

1

## LETTER XXII.

#### My DEAR SIR,

#### Paris, April, 1820.

In a former letter, I mentioned the exposition of the productions of French industry, which was made last year at the expense of the government, in the old, or as it should now be called, the new Louvre. The magnificent assemblage which was there displayed of all the creations of art, from the rudest necessaries of life, to the most exquisitely finished articles of taste, was very highly gratifying to the pride and vanity of this great people. Day after day, during the whole autumn, the long and spacious galleries of that palace were thronged by tens of thousands of spectators, attracted by the novelty and elegance of the spectacle.

In free countries, such manufactures as administer to the comfort and convenience of domestic life arrive soonest at perfection, in consequence of the demand which the wants of the mass of a society in easy circumstances necessarily create. Ia absolute governments, on the contrary, such objects as contribute to the luxury and voluptuous indulgence of the wealthy, are frequently brought to a high degree of perfection, whilst the articles of mere utility are left as rude and unfinished as in the earlier ages of invention. Thus it happened under the old government of France, that whilst her manufactures astonished the world by the richness of their silks, and the sumptuousness of their carpets and gobelin tapestry, their productions in the simple necessaries of social life were uncouth and wretched in the extreme. Even to this day, the remains of the extraordinary contrasts which were then universal, are frequently visible; and the English or American traveller, on arriving in France, is astonished at the incongruous assemblage of furniture in the same apartments .--Nothing is more common here, than to see magnificent mirrors

inserted into rusty walls; superb marble mantle pieces, with andirons fit only for a kitchen, and tile floors; silver forks and coarse iron knives; silk curtains, and no carpets, &c.

In the present letter, however, it is my wish rather to point out to you the progress which the French manufactures have made in the last thirty years, than to criticise their present imperfections. Great efforts have been made in foreign countries to conceal or to disparage the advantages which France may have derived from her revolution; and such facts as it was impossible to deny, have been reluctantly admitted, with the assertion that she might have attained the same eminence in the arts without the entire breaking up of that old system, since other nations likewise have improved during the same period. This assertion, however, in spite of its verisimilitude, is extremely disingenuous, and I think I have already said enough to convince you, that although the liberal institutions of England, for example, which have long fostered a spirit of industry in that country, may have given to her manufactures of useful articles a prodigious impulse of late years, the same advance could never have been made in France without a radical change in her system of government. I shall throw loosely together in this letter the notes which I made during the exposition, and must observe, beforehand, that there are no statements in them but those which resulted from my own observation, or which are supported by the report of the former minister of the interior. M. Chaptal, or of M. Costaz, or of the Central Jury.

If you ask me how it is possible that a nation, torn to pieces by intestine commotions, and sequestered from the world by perpetual hostility with her neighbours; a nation whose entire surface was for twenty years bristled like the back of a porcupine with arms, could find time and means to push forward her inquiries so gloriously in the arts, I can only reply, that the French are a people of extraordinary enthusiasm; that they have never wanted any thing but a good government to reach an unparalleled eminence in the arts; and that the illusion of liberty acted, for a time like the reality upon them. The prodigious results of that enthusiasm causes Europe to be as much astenished at present by the spectacle of what France has achieved within, as it was ten years ago by what she had conquered with-

48

out. In fact, the talent of this people had been so long restrained by the regimen of the straight jacket, that the moment the revolution unlaced it, genius bounded forth into the regions of discovery with extraordinary vigour and enterprize. Necessity is the mother of invention, and when the French beheld their ports blockaded by the fleets of their enemies, and their frontier circled by a belt of hostile bayonets, their privations forced them to turn their attention to their own resources; to the learning of their Savans, and the patriotism of their people. The discoveries in chemistry came in, most opportunely, to aid this spirit of innovation, and the rage for novelties caused many discoveries to be embraced and pursued, which in soberer times might have been neglected and forgotten. The chemist left the silence of his laboratory for the roar of the workshop, and enlightened the labours of the mechanic by the theories of the philosopher. At the darkest epoch of the revolution, when the proscriptions of the Convention were drenching France in blood, a few philosophical men, among whom Grégoire was eminently conspicueus, proposed the establishment of the Polytechnique School, the Conservatory of arts and trades, and the Bureau of Longitude. To the pupils of the first, France is indebted for almost all the prodigies of improvement which have inundated her of late years, and which have shone so conspicuously, not only in her battles and her sieges, but in her monuments-her roads-her canalsand her bridges. A society for the encouragement of manufactures, established by Chaptal, has been very serviceable in regulating the momentum which the national industry received from the enthusiasm of the revolution, and in introducing machinery into France. It may be asserted as generally true, that the manufactures of a nation improve in proportion to the division of labour, and the adoption of machinery; and that machines so far from diminishing the demand for labour, have hitherto, from the diminutive price they occasion in the manufactured article, increased it, and heightened the prosperity of every branch of trade to which they have been applied. The population of the manufacturing towns in England has multiplied ten fold since the use of labour-saving machines; and in every country, population has been encreased since the invention of the plough and harrow. We have an illustration of the

superior demand, in consequence of cheapening the price, in America in the increase of travelling between (for instance,) New York and Albany since the discovery of steamboats. Formerly, one or two stages sufficed for the conveyance of travellers between those two towns, and now the number of passengers averages about one hundred a day. The vulgar error of imagining that the adoption of machinery is a national evil, by keeping labonrers out of employment, formerly prevailed even at court in France, and inventions were for this reason discouraged. Some shallow thinkers continue of this opinion still, and so violent was the French prejudice against machines even twenty years ago, that the first spinning machines introduced into Normandy, and shearing machines, &c. into Sedan, after the peace of Amiens, were destroyed by the populace. If machines abridge labour, they multiply employment; as price is lowered, the demand increases; and as produce is enormously augmented to meet that demand, it creates new or additional markets for labour in other departments of industry.

The manufactures of France derived great encouragement likewise from the continental system, which not only gave them the monopoly of the home trade, but forced their productions on the neighbouring nations. Thus it happened, that in spite of the annihilation of her marine, her exports were never more flourishing than during that period. The downfall of this system checked the prosperity of some of the great factories whose clumsy machinery prevented their manufacturing as cheap as the English; but since the peace, new machines and more skilful workmen have come over, and the cotton factories especially have prodigiously increased in number and in importance.*

The expositions of the products of French industry owe their origin to an accidental thought of François de Neufchateau, a minister under the Directory. On the approach of the annual fête, in celebration of the downfall of monarchy, a committee was appointed to devise the best means of adding new brilliancy to the jubilee. In addition to the usual dances, games, and chariot courses which were to animate the rejoicings on the occasion, it was proposed to add an exhibition of the productions of

* (1821.) In 1816, there were 40,000 bales of cotton imported into France; in 1820, there were 120,000 bales imported into Havre.

the fine arts, since the establishment of the new government; and as the mechanical arts had then risen into favour, it was suggested that their productions would add eclat to the exposition. The experiment was consequently tried, and having succeeded beyond expectation, has been since occasionally repeated at distant intervals.

The assortment of cloths at the late exhibition established a fact of considerable importance to the lower classes in this country, viz. the increasing excellence of the coarser cloths, and their greater cheapness, arising from the introduction of machinery. Nor did the finer productions of Louviers and Sedan, which have so long been esteemed the first in Europe, lose their claim to superiority. On the contrary, specimens of the most exquisite fineness were exhibited, and a gold medal was awarded for the first time to cloth manufactured entirely of French wool. The superiority of the merino fleece of France to that of Spain, was likewise established to the satisfaction of the best connoisseurs. It is not twenty years since the French manufacturers showed great repugnance to the employment of their own wool, and contended it would never supply the place of Spanish, because it wanted strength. The Saxon wool, which is considered the finest in Europe, is shorter than the French, and supposed to give in general a softer polish to cloth, and hence, there now prevails in this country an opinion that the fleece of the merino gradually improves in northern countries. The Saxons drew their merines from Spain about eighty years ago, and the French theirs, near fifty years afterwards; and as the mountainous districts of France will counterbalance, it is supposed, the higher latitude of Saxony, the French hope to rival them in the general texture of the fleece in a few years. Carding and spinning machines were not used by the French till 1803, nor machinery in the manufacture of cloth, till three years afterwards. They now card and grease the wool used for cloths and cassimeres, but that which is used for stuffs, shawls, merine robes, &c. where the grain is visible, is combed (ungreased) by hands. The advantage of machinery is yet greatly in favour of England, where the whole operation of converting wool into cloth is sometimes performed by steam. I have seen at Mr. Hurst's, in Leeds, pieces of cloth

thus manufactured, superior in richness of finish and downy softness, to any in England; but I have not found any English cloth wear as well as the French.

M. Terneaux, the most distinguished man in France for his patriotic endeavors to improve woollen manufactures, has recently imported (at great trouble and expense,) the Cachemire goat of Thibet, from the down of which the celebrated shawls of India are made. Every acquisition which diminishes the specie-devouring trade of the East Indies, must be regarded as a blessing to the civilized world, and the enterprize of M. Terneaux has therefore entitled him to the gratitude of all Christian nations. As the tedious process of the Indian mode of manufacturing their beautiful shawls is the cause of their high price, and as manipulation is dearer in France than in the East, the Cachemire down would have been of little service but for laboursaving machinery. By this means, however, it is ascertained that shawls of great fineness may be afforded for thirty or forty dollars a yard; and thus the belles of Paris may soon be enabled to wrap themselves in the graceful folds of a Cachemire at a reasonable cost.

That part of the Leuvre which was appropriated to silks, exhibited a superb display of shawls and robes and furniture decorations—of gauzes, tissues, crapes in imitation of the Chinese, swansdown, painted and royal velvets, of the most beautiful designs and colourings. The transparency and lightness of some of those articles, and the downy voluptuousness of others, as they appeared stretched out in magnificent profusion before us, seemed to resemble more the tissues which the poets fancy to have been created by the looms of their immortals, than the productions of human ingenuity. Never before did the factories of Lyons, Nismes, and Tours, produce such a variety of fancy articles of taste, and of richly embroidered and figured stuffs for furniture, as on that occasion. New mixed articles of cotton and silk were likewise exhibited, in a state of perfection hitherto unknown.

It is only within the last ten years that the white silkworm, which produces the Sina silk of China, was propagated, although it existed in France. Yellow raw silk was formerly bleached by spirits of wine, which, independent of its expense, diminished

the quantity of silk, and left it liable to resume in time a yellow tinge. Native white silk is now, however, produced in abundance. In the last ten years likewise, great progress has been made in the art of spinning, dying, and weaving silken stuffs. The machinery of the looms has been much simplified and relieved from innumerable strings and pedals which embarrassed its operations; whilst the number, as well as strength of the workmen necessary to conduct them is much less, and the unhealthy attitudes they were obliged to assume for whole days, rendered unnecessary. These improvements, which relieve the hardships of a considerable number of persons, have chiefly arisen from the division of labour, which was prevented before the revolution by the regulations which required every man to work as his predecessor had worked. Thus, after the death of Colbert, and the expulsion of the Huguenots, manufactures made for a century very little progress in France; whilst in England the knowledge of mechanics was spreading itself every day, and her manufactures improving along with it. In this manner Great Britain acquired the superiority which she yet holds in most useful manufactures, and from greater skill in preparing even silk, although she grows none, some of her silken articles, and especially stockings, are far better than those of France.

It is only since the revolution that the art of manufacturing cotton cambrics, muslins, and calicoes, was known in France. At the exhibition, in 1802, there was not a single piece of muslim. Last year a variety of cotton goods, of excellent quality, were shown, and every day of peace with England enables the French to draw over workmen to improve their machinery. As the price of labour is much less in France than in England, and as the raw material is not dearer, what will be the consequence when the skill and machinery of the former get on a level with those of the latter? In 1806, the French did not spin cotton higher than No. 40, but now they spin as high as 200. It is not four years since a calico frock and cotton stockings were deemed beautiful in Paris!

Machines have been very recently used for spinning hemp and flax for coarse manufactures; and some progress is now making in the more difficult art of preparing thread for lace and cambrie. The manufacture of damask linens was brought here from Silesia, after the occupation of that country by Napoleon, and the art is now completely possessed. Those of horse-hair into stuffs for furniture; of varnished leather for morocco, which is now better than in the Levant, were unknown till within twenty years; and that of hats has prodigiously improved in the same time. The art of dying has kept pace with that of spinning. Among other discoveries, are the means of colouring linen as well as cotton-of fixing a durable green and heightening the vivacity of scarlet in the latter; of impressing Prussian blue (in lieu of indigo) on silk; and supplying the place of cochineal by madder in colouring wool. According to Chaptal, madder was brought into France by some Greeks before the revolution, but it is only of late that its properties have been understood-that all its various shades of red, from the dull chesnut of Madras, to the delicate hues of the rose, and the lilac. have been impressed on cotton.

Before the revolution, it is true, the French made carpets, which were admirable for the fineness of their texture and the richness of their colouring, but they were so enormously dear as to be almost confined to royal palaces and chateaux. But seweral private manufactories of carpets are now established, and have already so reduced their price, as to place them within the reach of moderate fortunes, and to introduce a general taste for this luxury among persons in easy circumstances. The want of carpets, however, is one of the most fortile sources of grumbling to John Bull in this country; and so far is the use of them from being general, that I have seen persons of distinction dining in winter on a marble floor.

Before the revolution, the French imported much of their paper from Holland and England, but they now supply themselves abundantly at home, although the general quality of their paper is inferior to that of the latter country. Some recently invented machinery makes coarse paper of a very large size at a small expense, and accounts for the great disproportion in Paris between the price of that and of superfine paper, to the making of which it is not applied. It is well known, that the French are now unrivalled in the manufacture of furniture paper, and that they have recently embellished it much by the introduction of historical and landscape scenes. The specimens exhibited last year surpassed, in taste of design and harmony of colouring, any thing of the kind ever before seen. Some new pieces, in imitation of velvets, satins, and other rich stuffs, were produced by M. Dufour, of Paris, in which the illusion was perfect.

The inferiority of all hardware articles in France to those of England, both in taste and quality, must surprise every traveller who is not accustomed to see silver forks with coarse knives, and uncouth locks on doors inlaid with mirrors. Such great progress, however, is here making in the art of working steel, that at the late exhibition, six medals were awarded to different manufacturers for their specimens of it in the natural, melted, and refined state. At the exhibition in 1802, there were no specimens of steel, and the manufactory of Béradière, which is considered superior to any other in France, is only of three years standing.

It is only within the last ten years, that the first manufacture of yellow brass, (Laiton brut) and of steel and brass wire, were established in France. The pewter mines were discovered about the same time; and the working of tin, which was then very limited, is now nearly large enough for the wants of the nation. Iron works were greatly improved under Napoleon. The first good files made in France, were produced in 1798; and the making of saws also, is a new acquisition. The first attempt to make scythes and sickles was made about the same time; and one manufactory made nearly as many last year, as were made in all France four years ago. Many articles of steel and iron, however, are yet excessively coarse and unsightly. Shovels and tongs, as well as locks, are as rude as one might imagine them to have been in the times of the feudal barons; and common knives are like pieces of iron, drawn out by a blacksmith and stuck in a piece of black wood. Models of these things would probably be brought over from Sheffield and copied, but for an unfortunate conceit existing here even among sensible persons, that because they make those articles better than formerly, they are equally as perfect as those made in England. The silver plate of France also yields, in richness and massy magnificence of appearance, as well as in the chasing, to that of England.-In the art of silver plating, they are said to have made much

* Report of the Jury.

† See Chaptal.

progress here, but the specimens exhibited in the Louvre bore no comparison to those made at Sheffield, and were even inferior to those of Birmingham. But whatever may be the defects of the French manufactories in these particulars, they infinitely surpase their neighbours in bronze ornaments, and the art of gilding them. The lamps with a double current of air, are also a new invention of some importance on the score of economy, even independent of their ornamental elegance. A great variety of curious lamps were exhibited; and the classic beauty of their forms reflected credit on the taste for the fine arts inspired under the imperial regime. It is a consolation to humanity, too, to know, that by the invention of a drawing furnace, the mercurial vapours arising from gilding are permitted to escape, and the workmen protected from the cruel disorders which formerly devoured those engaged in that labour. The annual product of this branch of trade alone, (gilt bronze,) is seven millions of dollars. A number of beautifully coloured articles of varnished metal, as well as some brilliant ones in tin, (moiré métallique) attracted every eye. The application of this varnish to tin, is a new discovery of M. Allard, and if it should be found to bear the action of the air without injury to the colour, the ornamental purposes to which it will be applied are innumerable. It has been much used for lamps and fancy articles, and with dazzling effect on the bodies of some of the royal landaus.

The French surpass the English infinitely in the making of plate glass for mirrors, but fall as far short of them in the shaping and cutting of crystal. There is, I believe, a very heavy tax in England on the casting of the plate, which prevents re-casting when the plate is defective, and increases the cost of large mirrors so as to limit the demand; whilst the imperfection of French crystal arises from the recent introduction of the art of cutting, and is therefore rapidly diminishing. It is stated in the report of the central jury, that France has already ceased to import crystal glass, and it is absurdly added, that she is as perfect in the art of making it as her neighbours. The manufacture has undoubtedly made great progress here, and some very resplendent toilette tables, and large pieces of furniture of crystal were exhibited. But there was no service of glass to be compared to what I have seen in England, and

49 .

especially a set recently sent for the Emperor of Russia. The English borrowed the idea of lighting their theatres by a single lustre, from the French, and their present superiority in crystal is observable in the greater splendor of their lustres. But when we consider the superior size, transparency, and cheapness of mirrors in France, there 'can be no doubt of her soon rivalling her neighbour in the other department. The French first substituted casting instead of blowing mirrors, as was practised at Venice; and the factory of St. Gobin, which supplies the plates to the polishing factory at Paris, is unrivalled in Europe. I have seen balls at some of the splendid houses at Paris, where all the men being dressed in uniform, in consequence of the presence of the princes, it was difficult to distinguish at a little distance, the folding doors which opened into other dancing rooms, from the mirrors which reflected the company in the one in which the spectator was; and I remember at least one large window in the Chateau at St. Cloud, looking into the Park, of a single sheet of glass, so entirely transparent, that until one had touched the glass, it was difficult to believe that any thing except the air intervened between the eye and the groves and fountains which animated the prospect. Whether an equal transparency exists in the windows of many of the the houses of this metropolis, it might be difficult to conjecture, and certainly not prudent to affirm, since the appearance of some of them might justify a suspicion, that their proprietors hold the dust and cobwebs on them in such reverence, that one might as well expect a Persian to blow the fire with his breath. as certain Parisians to use a sponge and water on their windows.

Great improvements have been made since the revolution in porcelain, and many of the specimens brought to the Louvre were magnificent. A vase and a tea table, valued at between six and seven thousand dollars each, were indescribably beautiful; and many tea cups, &c. valued at one or two hundred dollars a piece, were exquisitely painted. Porcelain was considered a mere article of luxury when the first manufacture of it was established in France, about the middle of the last century; but the art of making it has been so much improved and simplified of late years, that it is within the reach of all classes of society. The royal factory at Sevres, and several private ones in Paris, produce porcelain of an exquisite fineness, unknown in any other The Worcestershire factory in England, part of the world. professes to attempt to equal those of France in richness of colouring in general, but to despair of producing that transparent purity of white, which is the characteristic of the china made of the French clay. Their colouring is undoubtedly rich, but it is gross. Even in the set made for the king, there is a want of that ornamental lightness and elegance of decoration, which distinguishes the French manufactures from all others; and the cloudiness of their white prevents their attempting to rival the French in landscape and portrait painting on porcelain-The English however excel in a sort of middle ware, or mont grel china, suited to the purposes of the middling ranks of life, and exported by the name of Liverpool ware; whilst until lately the French had nothing between fine china, and miserable delph ware. Napoleon gave great encouragement to the Sevres manufactory, and caused the art of painting on porcelain as well as on the Gobelin tapestry to be carried to a perfection previously unknown. The costliness of very richly painted porcelain must prevent its becoming an object of commerce; yet such is the beautiful perfection to which M. Dilh carries this art, such the delicacy of his shades in colouring; and the icy hue with which he throws over a scene, the softness of the Scottish landscape, that the art must always be a source of national pride to the French. A discovery has been just made by M. Gonard of imprinting copper-plate engraving on porcelain by a mechanical process; and what is very extraordinary, nay, almost incredible; is that he can dilate or compress at will the impression he stamps from the same plate. Some of the examining jurors were admitted into his workshop, and after ascertaining the fact, rewarded him with a gold medal. I have understood, but cannot youch for the fact that an inhabitant of Caen has discovered the art of engraving on porcelain, which, if true, must be of some importance, since it will prevent the wearing of the plate, which occurs in engravings on metals. There are at present twenty manufactories of porcelain in Paris and sixty in France. Lithography was introduced into France in 1806, and has been much improved. As it serves to multiply with great rapidity, and at

small expense, copies of drawings, it facilitates the acquiring a knowledge of those arts, to the understanding of which they are necessary, and it has been successfully employed in stamping and gilding of porcelain.

It is almost impossible to enumerate the advantages of the discoveries of chemistry to the arts in France. In the art of dying, the researches of Berthollet might immortalize him. The most beautifully crystallized sugar at the exhibition was from M. Chaptal's beet manufactory, and the success of this justifies the hope that France will in time be able to cease supplying herself with this article at the price of encouraging inconceivable cruelties in the West Indies. The jury bestowed a silver medal on the Parisian manufacturers of soap for the progress they had made in perfecting this article, which is yet, however, so defective that English soap is universally preferred for the purpose of the toilette. The making of alum has also been so perfected in the last fifteen years as to put an end to the importation from Rome. The discovery of the art of purifying it by crystallization has removed the sulphate of iron that formerly gave a tarmish to the lighter and more vivid colours in dying silk. Formerly soda was imported; at present it is supplied at home; and Clichy now yields an abundance of white lead as good as that formerly imported from Holland. The making of black lead pencils is also new, but their quality is yet inferiour to the English.

The extracting of jelly for soup from bones, by, I believe, muriatic acid, is a recent discovery which renders a signal serwice to the indigent by producing a healthy and agreeable nourishment, free from smell, from substances hitherto considered useless. M. Darcet calculates that the bones of all the beeves and veals brought to the Paris market would by this process yield more than half a million of rations, (more than a million of soups) daily. The jelly is also used for transparent leaves, for drawing, resembling horn, and for transparent wafers; whilst by tanning, it is converted into a substance resembling a beautiful pink shell. Among the many advantages these discoveries have been of, may be reckoned the low price at which they produce the acids necessary in manufacturing. The use of salts, instead of more expensive agents, has cheapened the price of most articlass and thus produced a revolution in the arts. In 1789 France, imported, for example, soda, to the amount of a million of dellars, and she now extracts from marine salt an abundance for a tenth of that sum. The discovery that the watery vapour which rises during the process of distillation with that of alcohol condenses itself in a lower temperature, has simplified the art of distillation and made one heating only necessary to produce all qualities of brandy. In France where charcoal is used for cooking, the new discovery of the art of obtaining a third more of it by carbonizing the wood in a closed vessel would have been an object of importance, even if it had not been discovered that the finest of all vinegar is the substance which escapes during the operation. Charcoal is much used also in purifying filthy water in Paris, and in sea voyages; whilst animal charcoal is used in refining sugar.

The show of the implements of rural economy at the Louvre was neither large ner satisfactory. Some improvements have been made in ploughs and mills, but the number of discoveries fell far short of my expectation. To one accustomed to the lightness and convenience, for instance, of Scotch machinery the farming utensils of France must appear very rude and cumbersome; but the improvements of the last thirty years have been motwithstanding very great. Before the establishment of the conservatory of arts at Paris it was almost impossible to get in France so simple a machine as a cast iron plough, and notwith; standing their evident economy they are but rarely seen even yet in the fields.

The portable iron mill which Mr. Molard invented for the use of the army invading Russia is a very convenient machine, and might be very serviceable in the level country of our southern states.

No branch of French industry has been more improved since the fall of the old government than that of ornamental clocks, in which this nation so far excels all others. In Paris no bed room is considered furnished without one, and, therefore, independent of foreign exportation a predigious number are made to supply the home demand. Many artists are constantly employed in devising elegant forms and tasteful decorations to adorn them. Hence light and classical figures have taken the place of the rude and clumsy apparel which formerly surrounded the machinery. Among the many beautiful forms exhibited I observed one which from its curious appropriateness deserves to be mentioned. The time piece itself is a revolving globe, encircled by a belt on which are marked the twenty-four hours. Time leans on the frame of the globe and the end of his scythe points to the hour. By reference to the belt or zone you can of course perceive what o'clock it is in every other country. In 1789 there were two hundred thousand watches made annually in France; at present there are three hundred thousand. In clocks Paris alone employs nine thousand workmen and manufactures yearly to the amount of four millions of dollars. M. Jappy, of Beaucourt, who makes annually the rough works of more than two hundred thousand watches for exportation, and twenty thousand for France, commenced his factory a little before the revolution. The Swiss colony which established itself at Besancon in 1793, finishes about ninety thousand watches a year; and M. Beurnier makes the rough works of fifty-thousand for exportation. The improvements in watchmaking introduced by M. Breguet of Paris have given him a celebrity in this art above any other individual in Europe. Whatever may be the validity of the objection, so ingeniously alleged against him in the Edinburgh Review, that he has attended as much to the ornamental as to the useful part of horology, it cannot be denied that he has enriched every branch of the art by his inventions. The British parliament offered, I think, some years ago a reward that has not yet been obtained, of ten thousand pounds, to the artist who should make a chronometer sufficiently perfect to give the longitude at the end of six months without an error of two minutes in time. Breguet exhibited several admirable chronometers at the Louvre whose variation had fallen short of two minutes. Among the best he has made was a pocket one for Gen. Sir Thomas Brisbane, which under the most disadvantageous circumstances in his use, gave but the difference of a single minute at the end of six months.

It would be an endless task to attempt to enumerate the beautiful articles of furniture that were exhibited in the Louvre. The proverbial reputation of the French for taste in this particular was well supported. The articles in mahogany were of such exquisite finish and Beautiful design, that one may venture to

hope their neighbours, the English, will copy the forms of their secretaries, bureaus, and above all their bedsteads; for in every thing relating to the formation and ornament of the bed the French excel other nations; among others there was shewn a mechanical bed for sick or wounded persons, in which they are enabled to take any position they wish by means of mechanism. The superiour taste and beauty of Parisian furniture causes such a demand for it, that the number of workmen engaged in it in this city alone is 12,000, and the value of their work amounts to two and a half millions of dollars. The general amelioration which has taken place of late in the circumstances of the people of France, has of course augmented the reading part of the na. There are now upwards of three thousand works printed tion. annually in this country, and in spite of the cheapness of books, the value put in circulation is estimated by Mr. Chaptal at upwards of four millions of dollars.* The extensive application which Didot has made of the art of stereotype printing has put all the classic works of the language in circulation at so low a price as to place them within the reach of the poorer classes of society. There certainly is nothing truer than Lord Bacon's maxim, that "knowledge is power," and for this reason alone every art which reduces the price of knowledge is a national blessing. It has, therefore, ever appeared to me that taxes on paper and printing were relics of the barbarous policy of those governments whose interest it was to prevent the diffusion of knowledge; and that our duty in America on the importation of books in foreign languages was incompatible with the spirit of our political institutions. The time will soon come, I hope, when our government shall not only repeal it, but give a bounty on the printing of those works in our own language which tend to enlighten the mind and purify the heart. It is the interest and it should be the ambition of a free government to see good books in the hands of all its citizens.

Much might be said on the advantages France has derived from the introduction of the steam engine; the use of gas in illumination; the embellishment of the provincial cities, and of. Paris, in bridges, streets, gardens, &c. during the reign of Napoleon; but I fancy I must have already said enough to establish the suggestion with which I set out: that the revolution has given

* 21,652,726 francs.

man of science, who has devoted much attention to manufactures, has estimated the general products of manufactures in France, in 1815, at two hundred millions of dollars more than in 1789. But as M. Chaptal only values the products of manufactures in France at rather more than three bundred and sixtyfour millions of French dollars, including the eighty-three miltions two hundred thousand French dollars, for the rude materials drawn from agriculture, it is possible that M. Costaz's estimate may be somewhat too high. Yet as cottons, cassimeres, and chemical productions are all entirely new, and as the two first of these produced about fifty millions of dollars annually even three years ago, the aggregate increase may be supposed to be nearly equal to his valuation. One of the principal causes of this vast increase, is undoubtedly a change of opinion in the nation, by which industry is regarded to be more honourable; so that such men as the Duc de Liancourt-Rochefaucault now figure among the manufacturers of the kingdom. In absolute monarchies men who apply themselves to the mechanical and useful arts, are neither well rewarded, nor much esteemed; whilst those who devote themselves to the fine arts are very richly compensated. Hence, perhaps, it in some degree arises, that whilst painting, sculpture, and music, formerly flourished much on the continent, those arts which contribute to the solid well-being of the mass of society were neglected; and hence, also, the country which has carried the useful arts to a higher pitch of perfection than any other, (England) has produced the fewest painters. sculptors, and musicians of celebrity. Not that I would suggest that there is any incompatibility between the flourishing of the fine and of the useful arts at the same time in the same country, or sanction an idea but too common, that the cultivation of the one leads to the neglect of the other. On the contrary, I am convinced they will both ultimately flourish together. Hitherto the opulence and political circumstances of no nation have been adequate to the full encouragement of the fine and the useful arts at the same time. Where wealth has been concentrated into a few hands, it is lavished on the discoverers of things which contribute to luxury and ornament; and the nation in which it has been most dispersed, has not yet had time, since its diffusion, to

complete the circle of the mechanical, much less to perfect that of the elegant ones. Yet even already we perceive the English giving high encouragement to the fine arts, and rewarding the pencil of a West and a Lawrence, and the chisel of a Chantry, as well as the researches of a Davy, and the inventions of a Watts or an Arkwright. The same result is observable under the new order of things in France, where the useful arts have grown into reputation, and the more elegant ones have maintained the celebrity they formerly enjoyed. Thus at the late exhibition, at the same time that the halls of the old Louvre were appropriated to the gorgeous productions of mechanical industry, the spacious gallery of the new Louvre was radiant with the creations of the votaries of the fine arts. A communication between those palaces enabled the throng to circulate freely from the one to the other; and the same spectators that the impulses of curiosity invited into the halls of the first, were attracted by the pleasures of imagination into the galleries of the second.

Never, indeed, were there so many admirable productions of native talent exhibited; and I doubt whether all the countries in Europe have produced, in the last few years, as many good paintings as were there collected together. The tone of exaggeration, however, which characterizes the present national taste of France, and which but too frequently violates the "modesty of nature," was distinguishable in most of them. Genius never expressed any thing better than nature, and only differs from it in the enlarged capacity of inventing situations, and representing them as nature would have formed them. The chaste and the beautiful are, therefore, (although the most simple and sublime,) the most difficult and the latest of all attainments in the arts. In portrait painting, I do not, (as I suggested in my letter on the fine arts and the stage) think the French have any artist equal to Sir T. Lawrence, but in miniature painting, Sainte, Isabey, and Augustin, have no rivals. In historical painting, since the exile of David, Gérard holds the first place among French artists. He has, unquestionably, great merit; but there is an eternal straining after effect, and a sort of ranting in his attitudes, which I cannot admire. His master-piece is the triumphal entry of Henry into Paris, and it would be a. monument of national genius, if it were not for the superb contortions of his horses and men. If the painter had been an inhabitant of an obscure hamlet in the mountains of Auvergne, and had passed his early youth at a distance from the scenes of a court, such ideas of the pompous fury of every animal in the presence of majesty might have been excusable. But are they pardonable in one who has witnessed the most tremendous revolutions which have ever astonished the civilized world—who has beheld Kings on scaffolds, and Corporals in palaces—who has twice loitered under the shading elms of the Boulevards, and seen the ladies taking their ices at Tortoni's, whilst the Czar and his Tartars were marching to tear the eagles from the Tuileries, and plant the lilies in their stead?

There are many inventions and improvements in the arts, beyond doubt, which I have forgotten, or omitted to mention in this letter; but I have probably noticed enough to give you an idea of the impulse which the industry of this country has derived from the revolution, and from the grand and stupendous genius of Napoleon. There yet remains, however, much to be done; and if the ill-omened changes in the policy of the government, which are now beginning to throw a cloud over the prospects of France, should not interrupt the progress of her civilization, a few years will produce an immense improvement in the condition of this people. Imagination is delighted to range over the prosperous scene which is before them, if their rulers should not destroy it by forgetting that the frenzy of intemperate friends is sometimes more dangerous than the hostility of open enemies, It is to be hoped, that the Bourbons have learned the wisdom of liberality from the lessons of history, and the adversity of their own lives. If they have not, new scenes of affliction await this liberal and gallant people. I must reserve, however, what I have to say on this subject for my next letter,* which I mean to appropriate to the moral and political effects of the revolution, and to such general observations on the present state of Europe, as could not be conveniently introduced in a narrative of the domestic affairs of France.

#### I am, &c.

* That letter is the introductory one in the present volume, from p. 9 to p. 67.

# LETTERS FROM PARIS.

### **INTRODUCTORY LETTER.***

to be bour

Paris, 1820.

#### My DEAR SIR,

There is no period of history so replete with extraordinary events as that which has elapsed since the beginning of the French revolution; nor any which deserves to be more attentively studied, both in its causes and effects, by all who feel an interest in the future fortunes of the human race. As long as the military ascendency of France threatened the independence of all other nations, she excited equally, of course, the solicitude of the ignorant and of the accomplished part of mankind; and if, since a series of unparalleled reverses of fortune have thrown her back within her ancient limits and prevented her soaring above the ordinary flight of the great pations of Europe, the curiosity she awakened may have lost something of its intensity among the vulgar, it has

* This letter was the last written, and is now placed first only because it contains a brief sketch of the opinions of the others and of the present condition of some of the states of Europe. It has undergone no alteration except the addition of a few introductory remarks from the first letter, and of a note on the military oscupation of Naples. As the views of the Holy Alliance have completely unfolded themselves since these epistles were written, some parts of them may possibly be suppressed unless what Mendosa says should prove true. "El ambition de la emprenta es una colpa que no basta arrepantirse." Whatever is given, however, will be given unaltered.

2

been rather increased than diminished in the minds of reflecting men. As there never before occurred in the course of human events, so sudden a breaking up of the political encrustations of ages, as that occasioned by the French revolution; and as this general dissolution was in itself the inevitable consequence of causes similar to those which are now working with more or less effect in the other old monarchies of Europe, that revolution must be both in its character and consequences an object of the highest interest to statesmen and philosophers. Time, it is true, is yet far from having fully developed its ultimate effects on the social and political state of Europe; but enough is already known to correct many of the apprehensions which have been entertained respecting them. The acquisition of moral truths is always slow and gradual and a great part of human life is often spent in unlearning the errors of the multitude. Independent of the obstinacy of ignorance, there is a portion of vanity inseparable from our nature which makes the acknowledgment of error peculiarly mortifying, and for this reason we hold up its bandage as long as possible before our eyes.

Those who have written on the French revolution, instead of affording an illumination of the causes which produced that enormous political volcano; or of embodying its existing consequences into one view, so as to enable us to judge with tolerable precision, whether its eruptions are destined to increase or to wither the bloom of human civilization, have generally argued upon it with the prejudices of the nation to which they happened to belong and after the artificial habit of judging derived from the principles in which they were educated. They have consequently been misled rather by the suggestions of interest and the dictates of passion, than by an absolute want of candour. It has been the fashion too among the advocates of the new doctrine of legitimacy in France, and among the shallow and presumptuous observers of historical events in foreign countries to estimate the present moral feeling and political intelligence of the French by the monstrous atrocities and follies of the revolution. No sooner was the restoration accomplished than a flock of English writers, whose spleen had been engendered by the circumstances of a long and perilous war, hurried over to France to write journals which should harmonise with the tone of public resentment at

home. They accordingly stampt the image of their own prejudices on every observation they made; and so plausible were the epicediums they sang on the pretended extinction of morality and religion in France, that even in America the public judgment was most egregiously misled by their assertions.' It unfortunately happens for the respectability of human nature that no country is exempt from scenes of vice, and examples of iniquity, which if diligently collected together into one frame could not fail to create a most disgusting picture of national character. It is not however from the assemblage of all the defects of a people into one portrait, but from a comparative view of their good and bad qualities that a general conclusion is to be drawn; and for my part I confess I do not know on what ground those writers assume as a given axiom, the perfect moral and religious pulchritude of France in 1789. The hierarchy was to be sure at that time more richly endowed; cardinals and archbishops moved rather with the state and pageantry of princes than in a style becoming the professors of the doctrine of the meek and humble Jesus; numerous corporations of luxurious monks then rioted in lofty mansions which have been since converted into hospitals, and are now the abodes of penury or decrepitude; and the churches were then, no doubt, more frequently filled with showy congregations, who considered devotion rather as a profession than as an affection of the soul, and who deemed it respectable after the mass was celebrated to deride revelation, and to speak of religion as a thing only "bon pour le peuple." But along with the useless pomp and ostentation of that age, religious infidelity has likewise disappeared, and the practice of the moral duties of life is now held in higher estimation than the mere ceremonies of the church. Those who now approach the altar are not attracted by idle parade of their religion but by the aspirations of real piety; and that the clergy are not abandoned to poverty may be inferred, I think, from the fact, that sixty-eight millions of francs (about thirteen millions of dollars) are annually appropriated by the government to their support.*

It is somewhat difficult to fix a standard to measure the moral sentiment of a nation, and our opinions of its comparative eleva-

* Mr. Becke only estimates the tythes of England at two and a half millions sterling, and Colquhoun those of the United Kingdom at five millions, independent of the universities. Now, sixty-eight millions of branes will go at least as far in tion can only be at best an induction from particular appearances. Now, if the sentiments of personal independence and probity have undergone no change for the better in France since the revolution, how does it happen that ladies of rank and fashion are no longer seen pressing forward with alacrity to sacrifice their honour to the royal caprice? Why are *Ducs* and *Marchale* no longer seen soliciting preferment at the expense of the reputation of their wives and daughters? The truth is, that in spite of the inordinate temptations that have been held out to profligacy in France during the last thirty years, real morality and religion have very considerably extended their influence. The reform, I admit, is very far' from being complete; but it is silently working its way every day under the control of public opinion.

It has been asserted likewise, that the Revolution has flooded France with ignorance and immorality; that a general decay of instruction has been the consequence of the downfall of the old government, and that in spite of the occasional freedom of the press in France, the nation has made no advance in political intelligence, nor acquired a greater aptitude for the establishment of civil liberty than it possessed in 1789. But on what grounds these broad assertions are bottomed, (since it is admitted that the number of crimes has diminished) I know not. If idleness be the mother of vice, we shall not surely have the immense increase of the productions of agriculture and manufactures, cited as a proof of the increase of corruption. If a becoming regularity of behaviour, and submission to the laws, indicate correctness of moral dispositions in a nation, we shall not surely hear the bloodless revolutions of 1814 and 1815 cited to prove, that the national depravity has increased since that era, when every debate in the National Assembly was a signal for a massa-Before the revolution, a regiment could not be disbanded cre. without leading to scenes of robbery and disorder; after the late war, half a million of soldiers were let loose, at a time when all regular government seemed suspended, and yet they retired quietly to their homes without mutiny or depredation! The in-

purchasing the necessaries of life in France as five millions sterling in Great Britain, and the French elergy have no families to maintain. Formerly the elergy of France were more numerous than at present. Paris had formerly one ecclesiastic for every sixty persons, and now one for every six hundred. terruption of agriculture by the invasion of 1815, and the cold which blighted the crops throughout Europe in 1816, created a great scarcity of provisions, and yet no riots interrupted the public peace, or impeded the administration of the laws. In 1789 the government was bankrupt; the taxes collected at the point of the bayonet; the highways infested by robbers; the provinces mutineus, and the army disloyal: at present the treasury is rich; the national credit good; the taxes are collected with facility; travelling is perfectly safe; the departments are obedient to government; the army free from licentiousness; and yet we are required to believe, that the Revolution has demoralized France!

Most of the governments of Europe unquestionably did every thing in their power to make the French Revolution disastrous; and that they should now endeavour to keep up as long as possible the idea that they have not spent their exertions in vain, is natural in the extreme. It is for this reason that we hear so often reiterated, with an air of scoffing triumph, the question, "What has France gained by her Revolution?" To this it might be replied, that notwithstanding the inauspicious events which have attended it, she has gained a new territorial division of the kingdom, by which her various dissimilar provinces have been melted down into one community-an abolition of the privileges of the noblesse-the suppression of an oppressive ecclesiastical system, and of the right in religious corporations to hold landed property-an equal assessment of taxes over the whole kingdom-the establishment of an uniform system of jurisprudence, with the trial by jury-a respect for talents over birth, with a free access of any Frenchmen to any employment, civil or military-the equality of all, in the eye of the law-the subdivision of the great estates of the kingdom-the emancipation of industry from the shackles of Jurandes and Maitries, and consequently great improvements in manufactures and husbandry-freedom of conscience in matters of religion-the liberty of the press at least for books-a representative form of government, with a long et cetera of inferior advantages. All these, we may be told, might have been acquired without the trouble of revolution. True; but what reason have we to suppose that a government which had refused these blessings to the people for

centuries, would have accorded them of a sudden, without compulsion?

There is no individual who has so largely contributed to mislead the public opinion on the effects of the French Revolution as Mr. Burke. I remember well the difficulty with which observation and inquiry have lately removed some of the impressions I derived from his writings; and as he has become almost the oracle of aristocracy, from the fancied verification of some of his prophecies, it may not be amiss to examine, in this introductory letter, his claim to the praise that is every day so unsparingly lavished on his sagacity. After exclaiming, that in con_ sequence of the French Revolution, the age of chivalry was gone, and the glory of Europe extinguished for ever, he did not hesitate to assert, that "France had bought poverty by crime,"* and to predict "that she was going fast, and by the shortest cut, to that horrible and disgusting situation of a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and (at the same time,) poor and sordid barbarians."[†] Yet, after waging war for five and twenty years against successive coalitions of all the powers of Europe; after having suffered the most terrible defeats recorded in the annals of her history, and had her territory twice over-run by hostile armies; after having it occupied altogether four years by foreign troops, and lost by the last invasion alone, by pillage, contribution, and impositions on her new government, for former spoliations for the expenses of the war, and the support of the Army of Occupation, a sum estimated at nine hundred millions of dollars; France still remains in a more flourishing condition than any country in Europe. Her government, which, before the Revolution, could not raise, by straining every nerve, a neat revenue of more than about ninety millions of dollarst now collects with facility about one hundred and eighty millions annually. So far indged is France from having purchased poverty by her political changes, that her circulating medium is gold and silver, whilst that of many of her neighbours is paper or adulterated coin; her agricultural products have increased near a fourth and her manufactures more than doubled since the Revolution.§ Thus, in

* Vol. v. p. 85. †Vol. v. p. 185.

[‡] See le Rapport de M. le Directeur General de Finance, 5 Mai, 1789, which estimates the revenue at about 475,000,000 of livres.

§ See Chaptal and Costaz.

spite of her misfortunes, she appears like the fleece of Gideon, "irriguous with the dews of heaven, whilst the rest of the vicinage is dry."

Almost on the very page too, on which Mr. B. scoffs at Bolingbroke as a presumptuous and superficial writer, he does not hesitate to predict, that "a long series of years must be told before the population and wealth of France can recover in any degree the effects of this philosophic revolution, and before the nation can be replaced on its former footing."* He even went so far as to apprehend her depopulation from the flock of emigrants, that were then hurrying from her voluptuous climate, even into the icy regions of Canada, and foresaw in it the eclipse of her glory, and nothing less than her absolute ruin. You may, perhaps, feel disposed to place this prophecy along side of the assertion of a fashionable lady in Paris in 1792, that "France could not then go to war, because the Marshal de Broglie was too old." But let us seriously examine its correctness. The population of France was variously estimated in 1789. The National Assembly ventured to carry it as high as twenty-six millions, but the more probable estimate placed it at twentyfour and a half millions; and we may therefore conclude it did not exceed twenty-five millions. Yet France, after having lost about five millions of persons since 1789 by domestic massacre and foreign war, contained in 1819, twenty-nine and a half, and by this time no doubt contains thirty millions of inhabitants. This increase is nearly equal in number to that which took place in the century which elapsed from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, to the Revolution. It should also be remembered, that she now feeds abundantly this augmented population on a territory somewhat smaller than that on which her peasantry, from a supposed excess of numbers, were almost exposed to famine in 1788.†

* Vol. v. p. 244.

 $\dagger$  Mr. Neckar's rule for ascertaining population, by multiplying the annual births by 25³/₃, gave France over twenty-four millions in 1780. The multiplication of the deaths by 29, and of the marriages by 113⁴/₃, gave nearly the same result. As the relative proportion of births to population in France is now ascertained by census to be at present 1 to 21--23, his multiplier was probably quite high enough. But M. Brion de la Tour, Ingénieur Géographe du roi, gave as the "resultat, par approximation de nombreuses recherches sur la population de la France," twenty-five and a half millions in 1790.

Mr. Burke predicted, that in consequence of the division of France into departments, the inhabitants of that region, instead of becoming all Frenchmen, would, in all likelihood, "shortly have no country at all."* He not only declared, that in a political light he considered France expunged out of the system of Europe, but that "whether she could ever appear in it again, was to him a matter of doubt because the fall from a height was with an accelerated velocity, but to lift a weight up to that height again, was difficult and opposite to the laws of physical and political gravitation." Now whether the Revolution has actually "barbarized France," as he prophecied it would, might be easily determined by all who have had occasion to observe the unparalleled prosperity which the useful as well as the elegant arts have of late enjoyed in this country; and whether the Revolution has "destroyed all her consequence as a nation," might be answered by the personal experience of every country between the Pillars of Hercules and the Baltic;-between the Kremlin and the Pyramids.

It might be easy to enlarge the number of these lofty predictions which time has shown to be empty of all foundation in the nature of things; but the above quotations are sufficient, I conceive to prove that the opinions of Mr. B. on the consequences of revolution in the old feudal monarchies were fundamentally false. He has delivered his ideas, it is true, with a certain sublimity of discourse which occasionally confounds the understanding; for his mind was naturally so full of light, that even when his thoughts are mere prejudices, they resemble the corruscations of sea water when disturbed in the dark. In the beginning of the revolution his visions were seemingly verified by the sanguinary follies of the populace; but the consequences of a political revolution are not to be judged of from its first effects. The characters of men are not formed in a day; and no one can believe that the old government fostered morality since so large a body of its subjects were found ready (the moment a link was broken in the chain of submission) to consider national honour an empty dream, and private justice a mere chimera.

The truth is, that the virtue of France had been "slain by despotism," and that her rulers, after debauching the morals of the

* Vol. v. p. 352. [†] Speech on the Army Estimates.

nation by the profligacy of their lives, had suffered it to become enlightened without being aware of the consequences of intelligence. No union is so unnatural as that of vice with talents, and no forms so hideous as the monsters it generates. The sudden. ness of the revolution unfortunately placed this unnatural connexion in a very conspicuous point of view; but those who inquire into the character of political revolutions with an eye to truth, should be cautious never to confound the ebullitions of expiring despotism with the effervescence of established liberty. The first constitution of France went into operation under the pressure of every embarrassment that ages of despotism and disorder could accumulate. The wheels of the machine were clogged, and the harmony of its movements destroyed. This occurred too, when miracles were expected by the sanguine spirit of the times from the influence of freedom; for no one seemed disposed to remember that years were necessary to enable even liberty to convert penury into abundance, or distress into prosperity. All gave way to the inspirations of hope, and none to the dictates of reason. Although experience shows that it is not from the gusts of passion, but from an enlarged comprehension of general principles, drawn from observation and the practice of nations that the laws of an empire should emanate, the legislators of France precipitately overturned every thing. Unhappily, the storm which was then up, had blown out the lights of reason, and obscured the stars of experience. The navigators of the ship of state spread her canvass too freely to the wind, and as they left no helm to guide her, when the wind veered she veered along with it, and giving her sides to the roll of the sea, she had her masts immediately carried by the board. In this deplorable state of things the management of the wreck naturally fell into the hands of the most desperate and atrocious of the crew; for the mass of the nation being untrained in the exercise of political rights mistook loudness of profession for sincerity of heart. They had no idea of a government without absolute power, and therefore after investing their new rulers with despotic authority, fancied themselves free because they had stripped the crown of its prerogatives. Vain and ridiculous delusion! and yet what torrents of blood has it cost this brave and generous nation to get rid of it.

3

Men accustomed to regard success as the test of merit dispense with the sentiment of justice when their ends are best answered without it; and among the subjects of arbitrary governments it very generally happens that a hypocritical zeal for liberty declines, in proportion as hope is increased by the possession of power. No country ever experienced this more cruelly than France, for the theory of liberty spread over her before her inhabitants were initiated into the mysteries of its practice, or comprehended its nature. Many sensible Frenchmen consequently became republicans rather from vanity than principle, and the mass of the nation were so ignorant that they mistook the degradation of their superiours for liberty. "There were then," said Madame de Stael, "perhaps as many remarkable men among us as among the English, but that mass of good sense of which a free nation is proprietor did not exist in France." In consequence of this want of general knowledge, a gang of political madmen and scoundrels possessed themselves of the powers of the state, and plunged the nation headlong into all the horrors of anarchy, despotism, and civil war. The enemies of freedom rejoiced at this; they exerted themselves to exasperate the public mind and to heighten the confusion, for what they most dreaded, was the success of the revolution. In this they were but too successful. For when they had succeeded in working up the passions of ignorant wretches to acts of frenzy, they availed themselves of these to calumniate the spirit of liberty by representing every atrocity as its legitimate offspring. But it is not until some nation whose existence has been long sweetened by the action of a free government shall have been guilty of glutting its vengeance on its governors by such infamous atrocities, that those who love and respect human nature are bound to relinquish their affection for freedom. If men who have been long condemned to live in the obscurity of dungeons lose their sight by a sudden exposure to the light of the sun, it is not a proof that the open air is less salutary or less congenial with the human constitution than the humidity of caverns.

Some very judicious writers have imagined that if the life of Mirabeau, (the Jupiter Tonans of the national assembly) had been spared, he would have arrested the torrent of innovations which deluged France immediately after his death. That he

might have impeded its velocity is extremely probable, but that he would have been able to prevent all the desolation it occasioned is scarcely to be believed. Things had progressed too The king instead of sailing gallantly on the tide of the refar. volution, had made some unmannerly struggles to stem it; and as the current had become ruffled and perturbed by opposition it had already drifted him among rocks and shallows. The points which he yielded to public clamour were concessions, not grants, and those acts which might have been beautiful when embellished by the grace of charity, became odious when covered by the shroud of extorted compliance. If when the accents of liberty were first heard in France, Louis had imitated Orpheus and attuned his harp in unison with the siren voice of the times, he might have convinced his people of his sincerity and eluded the dangers that assailed him. The French were then peculiarly susceptible of the illusions of imagination. They were prone to be vain too of the accomplishments of their sovereign, from the habit of identifying themselves in some degree individually with him. But the ungracious manner in which the king, under the influence of the court, surrendered his useless prerogatives, and acquiesced in the court scheme of opposing the army to the nation, induced the people by degrees to regard him as their enemy hat the heavy that the Street here here beer markable for any tathe outinis?

The legislators of France estimated the civilization of their country by the refinement of the upper ranks, and by the taste and genius of its artists and literati, without ever remembering that its civilization was extremely defective in the education and condition of the lower classes of society. They accordingly inferred that France was the most civilized country on earth. They did not perceive that the absolute form of their government, which had raised the rich to a state of high refinement and corruption, had condemned the peasantry to indigence and ignorance; or if they did perceive it, they fancied the debased condition of the lower orders the inevitable result of the established laws of nature, and as forming, for that reason, no peculiar feature in their own national physiognomy. Hence they hurried on the revolution with a precipitancy which had well nigh proved entirely fatal to the cause of liberty; for from excess of vanity

the French are so prone to ascribe the failure of their revolution to their ideal merits, that I have heard it asserted in Paris that "France was too enlightened to be free!" So universal indeed was the delusion I speak of in the first years of the revolution, that Condorcet, who was unquestionably a man of extraordinary talents and benevolent feelings, was so enchanted with the theoretical excellence of the French constitution, (even at the time when the blood-hounds who had usurped its administration were in pursuit of his life,) as to exult in its fancied superiority over that of America, and to praise it as the most perfect model of human wisdom.* He never seems to have thought of measuring its excellence by the real extent of civilization and morality in France; for if he had, he must have perceived how unsuited it was to the actual condition of the nation. In this he followed the examples of his countrymen, for although there is no subject on which more study and knowledge are required to clarify the understanding, than government, and none on which more reflection is necessary to determine the suitability of any particular form of it to any particular state of society, yet there is none on which men so universally think themselves qualified to judge. Ordinary minds almost always reason from proximate causes to their immediate effects, without taking into consideration the wide range of circumstances that influence the question. Due has reason to observe the pernicious effects of this habit of reasoning every day in common life, and to deplore its existence the more because there are no errors so obstinately adhered to as those which are bottomed on the appearance of reason.

Abstractedly considered, government is an evil, and therefore if it were practicable, it might be best to do without it altogether. But as the imperfections of our nature render it indispensably necessary to the improvement of our moral and intellectual being, it becomes, in its proper application to man, a blessing. The former of these circumstances (the inconvenience of the restraints of government) makes men of little observation and experience so fond of Utopian schemes, and so sanguine of their success in application to any people; and it is the latter, (the advantage and necessity of some government) that weds adult ignorance so powerfully to existing institutions, and reconciles

* See Progress of the Human Mind,

it to the abuses of power. In political legislation, the great difficulty consists in fixing the precise degree of restraint necessary for a particular community; for as it should be great or small in proportion to the barbarism and corruption, or to the civilization and virtue of a nation, a very profound and accurate knowledge of these circumstances is previously necessary to judge of it.

In a society trained up like that of Paris, under the old regime, to consider favour and disgrace at court as the tests of merit, no high sense of justice could be expected to prevail; and to persons accustomed to the unrestrained indulgence of their passions, the censorship of public opinion soon becomes exceedingly irksome. All the habits of life and modes of thought toe in France were purely monarchical; and as a change of laws cannot immediately effect a change of usages, it was very natural for the French, as soon as their rage against their rulers was over, to wish to return to their ancient institutions, under which they had at least enjoyed more tranquillity than under the new. The re-establishment of monarchy, however, was retarded in France, not only by the number of distinguished persons who dreaded the enmity of the Bourbons, but by that immense body of citizens who became interested by purchase in the national domains, and who constantly apprehended the loss of their property as the consequence of a restoration. So conscious indeed were the public of a monarchical proclivity of mind in the nation, that in the choice of the Directory, none but regicides were elected. If any solid guarantee of a general amnesty or oblivion of the past, and a security to the holders of places and property of retaining them, could have been given by the Bourbons, the soi-disant republique would have expired immediately. There is every reason to believe that a part of the Directory so anxiously wished the re-establishment of monarchy, that they suffered many disorders, with a view of reconciling the people to the change. They knew full well, that political liberty is never in greater danger than when intestine wars and commotions have so fretted and fatigued a nation, as to render it so anxious for tranquillity as to be willing to rush into servitude in order to escape from anarchy. The first step, therefore, of the monarchical directors was to rid themselves of such of their colleagues as were disposed, from attachment to liberty, to con-

solidate the republican system. The revolution of the 18th Fructidor, (4th Sept. 1797) which expelled Carnet and his colleague, was accordingly brought about, and during the two succeeding" years the nation was suffered to be disgraced by defeat abroad, and agonized by faction within, in order to disgust it with republicanism. There is reason to believe that the Orleanist party, at the head of which was Sieves, late minister at Berlin, hatched a project of putting the Duke of Brunswick on the throne of France, with the title of Grand Elector. Monarchical predilections, no doubt ran high when Sieyes returned to Paris, after the expulsion of Carnot, and were held at bay only by the republican committee under the influence of Bernadotte. But whilst Barras and his friends were intriguing for the Bourbons, and Sieves and his friends for the German Prince, General Bonaparte returned from Egypt. The fame of his distant expedition, and his sudden apparition in France so electrified the public mind, that Moreau is said to have exclaimed to the directors, "Voila l'homme qu'il vous faut." On his arrival in Paris he assumed a lofty demeanour indicative of conscious superiority, and under the mask of patriotic ambition, put all the engines of intrigue in motion. He seemingly gave into the schemes of each party. He consoled the Bourbonists with a prospect of the gradual accomplishment of their views, as he afterwards created a Bourbon king of Etruria to gull them; he wheedled Sieves by an apparent acquiescence in his grand electoral project; he flattered the republicans by a pretended zeal for liberty, and a wish to save them from the jaws of the Jacobins; whilst he contented the Jacobins by promising them a share of power and a secure possession of their plunder. Each party was of course delighted with him, nor did any seem to apprehend his intention to assume dictatorial power till the night preceding the eclatante revolution of the Orangerie on the 18th Brumaire (9th November, 1799.) At a meeting in the Thuileries on that evening as Sieyes was reading his scheme of a Constitution, Bonaparte revealed his intentions by exclaiming with an air of authority, "Efface the words Grand Elector and Absorbing Senate, and substitute First, Second, and Third Consuls and Conservative Senate." The conspiracy had then proceeded too far to fall back, and Sieves perceiving that the Rubicon was past, is said to have

exclaimed with characteristical complaisance, "He is our master; we must follow him!"

In one of my former letters, I have endeavoured to point out the high praise to which Bonaparte, as first Consul, was entitled, for the manner in which he tranquilized the internal distractions of France; for the code of civil law he established; and for the vigour of his military expeditions. Now, that such a man, uniting to the highest powers of genius, a peculiar tact for the management of other men, should render himself the favourite of a brilliant people like the French, is so natural, that it would seem surprising, that his elevation to the throne should not have been immediately foreseen. His excessive impatience of all opposition too, gave early indications of the despotical cast of his character. He promptly iminated the few independent men from the Tribunate, and treated with contemptuous neglect the opposition members of the Senate. This alone was sufficient evidence of a wish to centre all power in himself. "Car il est de la nature du despotisme de tout avilir."*.

The French are far from being an avaricious people, and yet their passion for places is so strong, that it may be considered the political leprosy of the nation. It is more for honour than profit, however, that these are coveted; and therefore after Bonaparte had multiplied offices as far as possible, and reserved all appointments in his own hands, he judiciously invented the Legion of Honour, as a gratification to private vanity.

From the moment he ascended the throne, his constant policy was, as Tacitus said of Tiberius,[†] to strengthen the foundations of his own power. Having fixed his eyes on that object alone, he deemed it expedient to preserve the forms of the constitution, and to amuse the public for a time with the phantom of liberty. The phraseology of the republic was accordingly retained, and the 14th of July still celebrated, because, as was pretended, the Empire consolidated the blessings of the revolution. But the throne of Napoleon was actually established without any restrictions on its power. His Senate was the mere register of his edicts—his nobility, the ornamental plumage of his cown—and his clergy, the preachers of the divine right of kingst of course the blasphemers of the benignity of heaven.

* Mebly.

† B. iii. 60.

A scheme of universal conquest was immediately embraced by the emperor, and to the accomplishment of that object, every principle and feeling of the human heart were sacrificed. A system of overlooking other nations by spies and intriguers, was so organized abroad, as to render peace fraudulent, and war atrocious; whilst at home, as in Rome under the Cæsars, informers were encouraged to struggle, as it were, in a race, who should first accomplish the ruin of his man.

The final organization of the French police, the most tremendous political inquisition the world ever saw, completed the circle of Napoleon's engines of despotism, and enabled him in the plenitude of tyranny, to sit like a "cormorant on the tree of life." Under the supervision of that dreadful police, the jocund hilarity of the French people (to with nature has given more ample materials of happiness than to any other) began to partake rather of the fierceness of savage brusquerie, than of the gentle exuberance of civilized gayety. Suspicion pervaded every circle of society, and the fear of treachery poisoned even the confidence of domestic enjoyment. Before the end of his reign such was the ubiquity of his espionage, that there was no hole or corner of the empire free from it; and like the head of Medusa, it began to petrify every goodly thing that looked upon it. The social intercourse of honest people was almost come to a pause, and there seemed to be fast reviving in Paris, that gloomy period of imperial Rome, when "men were afraid of knowing each other; when relations, friends, and strangers stood at gaze, for things inanimate had ears, and roofs and walls were deemed informers. "*

The peace of Tilsit may be justly considered as the apogee of Napoleon's grandeur. His treasury was then full; his armies were magnificent; and his politics governed Europe. But an undisturbed career of prosperity, and the perpetual anodyne of adulation, had lulled the vigilant activity of his mind, and brought him to consider himself so superiour to other men, that he regarded their advice as opposition, and mistook their prudence for cowardice. It is said, that Talleyrand, about that time, fell on his knees to implore him to make peace where gland, and assured him that if he would do so, George III. would

* Tacitus, b. iv. 69.

For a long time the people of France were dazzled by the splendour of their Emperor's victories, and consoled for their social afflictions by the prospect of his conquering the world. But when adversity overtook him, and the brilliant phantom of their vain-glorious ambition vanished, their enthusiam for the emperor vanished along with it. The French were, therefore, rather the idle spectators, than the active opponents of the first invasion of their country, so that the most gallant efforts of their chief could scarcely rouse a single department from its apathy. The remains of the old guard may have burnt their eagles and drunk their ashes, but he fell unlamented by the French nation, and unpitied by his enemies. Most men smiled to see

> "The desolator, desolate, The vistor overthrown, The arbiter of others fate, A suppliant for his own."

It may be difficult for posterity to believe it, but it is nevertheless true, that the *first* abdication of Napoleon, caused a jubilee throughout Europe; for the French rejoiced with other nations. They fancied it would put an end to wars and conscriptions; to rapine and oppression; whilst the belief, that there was no disgrace in the restoration of their legitimate sovereign, prevented them from being sensible of the shame of defeat. They welcomed the return of the Bourbons, as Clarendon says the English welcomed that of the Stuarts. "The joy was universal. Whosoever was not pleased at heart, took the more care to appear as if he was; and no voice was heard but of the highest congratulation, or extolling the person of the king, admiring his

4

condescension and affability; raising his praises to heaven, and cursing the memory of those villians, who had excluded so meritorious a prince." Yet how soon in both countries did the wand of experience allay this exuberance of joy, and dissolve the visions of hope! The evil of oppression, which the French had identified with the rule of the ex-emperor, was soon discovered to be inherent in the nature of bad systems of government, that in less than a year after the deliverance, a spirit of discontent pervaded very generally all the countries once comprised within the limits of the empire. Those nations had sighed for repose, and were willing to purchase it at any price; but when it was acquired, and failed to bring along with it its anticipated blessings, regret and displeasure succeeded to thoughtless rejoicing. This revolt of opinion was going on every where when Napoleon landed from Elba, and was already so strong in France, as to neutralize all opposition to him, although it had not gained strength enough to support him vigorously in his last campaign. In the German states along the Rhine; in Belgium, Saxony, Switzerland, and Italy, great discontent likewise prevailed, but as the humiliation of conquest did not exasperate in them the hostility to existing governments, and as the iron rule of Napoleon was yet fresh in their memories, their discontent was not then ripe for insurrection, and accordingly no rising took place in his favour.

In France, a violent spirit of resentment animated a few to exert themselves for him; but the national enthusiasm had been so much damped by the disappointments of the revolution, and even patriotism itself was so benumbed by the dread of despotism, that the brilliant exertion at Waterloo was the only effort he could get the nation to make for its independence. The hope of obtaining liberty in any event was gone; and that fine spirit which animated France in the beginning of the revolution, and which offered three millions of volunteers for the army, was gone along with it.

The second restoration did not cure the spirit of discontent, neither in France nor in the neighbouring countries. It still prevails in such force, that it requires the *whole weight* of the *Holy Alliance* to keep it down. Arbitrary laws have been enacted to suppress it, but these only aggravate the evil, and by confining it for a time, may cause it to burst out with greater violence in the end. In France, in particular, the occasional disregard of the charter, and the bad municipal regulations of the kingdom serve to inflame it. Casual observers may be disposed to doubt this, and to infer that that spirit is dormant here, because the nation is tranquil, and because the government is now able, in relapsing into arbitrary measures, to obtain a majority in the chamber of deputies. But a nation, whose memory is yet sore from the stings of a long and disasterous rebellion, may be almost universally dissatisfied with the new administration of its government, and desire a reform of it, without being willing to encounter the horrors of a civil war, or the dangers of a foreign invasion to accomplish it. There are things which men would gladly purchase at a heavy price, but in a precarious attempt to obtain which, they might not be disposed to risk their all. In a country too where the channels of information are choaked by the censorship of the press, it is difficult for any portion of the people to collect and understand the real sentiments of the general public; and men are loath to move in opposition to government, until they are certain of the ripeness of the occasion; for they know that it is as wise to commit the beginnings of great undertakings "to Argus with his hundred eyes, as the ends to Briareus with his hundred hands."*

If any mode of collecting the free thoughts of the public had existed under Napoleon, public opinion would have tempered the madness of his ambition; but he suppressed every means of ascertaining it, and deceived himself, by mistaking the forced applauses of the little multitude around him, for the approbation of the heart of the nation. When adversity overtook him, he discovered this, and is said to have exclaimed in the bitterness of sorrow, "It is public opinion which has put me down—I have so shocked it, that I cannot regain its confidence, or excite its enthusiasm." Under him, in fact, no independence of sentiment was suffered to exist, and his *Corps Legislatif* itself was drilled into a passiveness and subservience, exceeding that of the ancient parliaments of France. Tyrants possess an instinctive sagacity in substituting the semblance for the reality of freedom. About two centuries ago, artful ministers succeeded in destroying the states general in France, by persuading the people, that the parliaments were as good a shield for the protection of their rights. It is thus that those parliaments, which in the end became serviceable, by checking the extravagance of despotical presumption, were in their origin a source of evil to France, because they reconciled her to the loss of her real protectors. Cardinal Richelieu, whose mind was solely bent on consolidating the royal authority, and extending the foreign influence of France, was, perhaps, more than any other individual, the cause of this misfortune to his country. In this particular, he acted like the tyrant "Dionysius, when he gave to Apollo a garment of Arcadian stuff, in lieu of his cloak of gold,"* and persuaded him it was better for keeping out the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Bonaparte acted the same part, when he destroyed all vitality of principle in his Corps Legislatif, and then sitempted to persuade the French. that the public sentiment of France was embodied in it. He knew that a draught of pure hemlock might be too bitter to be swallowed by the nation, and therefore he bedewed the edges of the chalice with honey. It has become, however, a fashion of late among the friends of liberty, to forget the tyranny of Napoleon, because other tyrants of inferiour parts have arisen to imitate his example. But the greatness of his talents seem to me rather to aggravate than excuse his faults; for we ought to measure the iniquity of any offence, by the capacity of its author to judge of its deformity. Now surely no one ever possessed a finer genius, or a nobler opportunity of benefitting mankind, than Napoleon; and no one ever disregarded as absurdly the prosperity of the world, when it came in opposition with the plunges of his own remorseless ambition.

The present charter of France was formed, whilst the events of the revolution were yet fresh in the mind of Louis XVIII. and it was consequently drafted rather as a remedy for particular evils, than with an eye to the true proportions of a representative monarchy. The instrument is accordingly so imperfect, that it cannot last half a century in its original shape. It is of an equivocal nature, half formed in the interests of despotism, and half in the

* Jeremy Taylor.

interests of fiberty; so that it suits neither a free nor an absolute form of government. The ultra-royalist party (which is now nearly in power) cannot carry its political principles into execution, without violating its securities of freedom, and has not therefore hesitated to interpret it after the dictates of convenience. When the Liberals get into power, which in the course of events they must do, who can believe that they will suffer such provisions to exist, as those which refuse the chambers the right of proposing laws, and make the sessions of that of the peers secret; which require a member to be forty, and an elector thirty years of age; which suffer the benches of the chamber of deputies to be filled by public functionaries, whose salaries are of course standing bribes; and admit the existence of a law by which that body is divided into the deputies of the very rich. and the deputies of the tolerably rich? Already has M. Manuel announced an ingenious division of the charter into fundamental articles, which the government has no right to change, and regulatory ones, which it may alter at pleasure. But in practice, the regulatory articles alone have been treated with punctilious respect. For at present, the French nation enjoys the right of personal liberty by the charter, and the government the right of arbitrary imprisonment by a special law;* the charter guarantees to the former, the liberty of the press, and a law secures to the latter the previous censorship even of carricatures and journals of fashion; the charter grants a free toleration in matters of religion, and the government has recently placed education in the hands of the Catholic clergy; the charter secures the subject the right of petition, and a ministerial majority refuses to hear it read; the charter grants the right of suffrage to all persons paying a certain tax, and the law virtually destroys this, by refusing to three fourths of the voters, the right of voting for nearly one-half the deputies, (the 172,) and another law makes the minister the ultimate judge of the right of an elector to vote. Thus there is, seemingly, two governments in France, one of right and one of fact; one that speaks, and another that acts; one created by the charter, and one substituted by law.

* See Laws of April, 1820, and the amendment.

Louis XVIII. it is true, exercises all those powers with great wisdom and moderation. So much so indeed, that if laws were only to be deprecated for the evils arising from their application, and not from their general effects on the moral character of a nation, there might be but little reason to deplore the existence of those powers. But it is not so much the truth that is suppressed by the censorship of the press, as the impunity it secures to falsehood and vice-not so much the suffering of a few individuals whom the right of arbitrary imprisonment may cause to be incarcerated, as the universal restraint which the mere apprehension of it inspires, that is to be deprecated in a civilized community. That the king of France should proceed in the administration of his government with consummate caution is not only justifiable but highly commendable; yet the day on which he suffered his government to separate itself from justice was a day of mourning for humanity. There is much reason to believe, to be sure, that those members of the oligarchic party, who read over every day the pages of the revolution to keep alive their passions, prevailed on the king much against his will to adopt those measures; but a monarch so justly celebrated as Louis for his intelligence, should have seen that it is no longer in the power "d'une classe blasée d'enclouer les destinées de la civilization." He ought to have remembered that where men are enlightened, even the heart of loyalty is flawed by laws of terror. Such laws, if used, make proselytes by persecution and the blood of martyrs; and if not used, where is the utility of shocking all rational minds by enacting them. We know from experience that power stretched too far defeats its own ends. The dagger of Lucretia; the arrow of Tell; the resistance of Holland; the tea tax in America; the blood of Sidney and Russell, and the more recent fate of Porlier at Corunna, speak volumes on this subject. It is the nature of man to revolt against tyranny, and the greater the excess of this, the sooner is he armed with the courage to conspire. Hence it is that in enlightened countries despotical measures do not prevent but excite rebellion. In Great Britain the liberty of the press has created an independent public opinion in every village from the isle of Wight to the Hebrides. The government knows this opinion, and by resting on it, finds a foundation as firm as that of a pyramid. The metropolis

is the mere apex and has no more influence than it is entitled to. But there is nothing of that kind in France. Here there are no free journals to form the public opinion, or to shew the direction in which it points; of course not much more confidence is placed in the assertions of a gazette than in those of a police officer whose business it is to deceive. The best intentioned people not being able to ascertain any fact with correctness take but little interest in public concerns. This causes the government to stand on a very ticklish foundation, like a pyramid inverted, and ready to be blown down by every gust of wind in Paris. As no one knows the opinions of the departments, no body relies on them for support, and hence in all the stages of the revolution a successful insurrection in the capital overset the government. The debates of the deputies are beginning, to be sure, to form the public opinion in the nation, but the ministry are not prone to submit to the control of this new agent. Yet the present government was never so strong as during the temporary freedom of the press in 1819. An attachment to it was then taking root in every part of France; for although a strong voice was heard in favour of a reform of its abuses, the suffering of this voice to be heard was deemed by the nation at large an unequivocal proof of the confidence of the government in itself.

I have heard it said that notwithstanding the penalties against licenciousness, the liberty of the press was scandalously abused during that year in France, and that it was becoming a stiletto to wound indiscriminately the innocent and the guilty. Now the very reverse is the fact Virtuous men then possessed a shield in the right of defending themselves, whereas at present the renutation of every man is in the hands of the censors of government; for without the consent of these there is no denving the imputations of malignity or revenge. It is quite natural, however, that the liberty of the press should have many enemies in France, for wicked men do not love the light that exposes their crimes. Those whose hands are stained with blood, or whose hearts are putrid with vice, or whose coffers are full of the fruits of extortion, (and the revolution has brought forward some such men) are too cunning to wish to see a mental microscope put into the hands of public justice. But a great majority of the people of France are honest and well disposed. Is it not then as absurd to refuse them permission to publish their thoughts lest they might defame their neighbours, as it would be to shut them up in their houses to prevent their committing robbery on the highways? Those who have witnessed the action of a free press know that it is the best corrector of error; and that although it may inflict occasional pain by the publication of a libel, it secures ultimately the triumph of truth, and the infamy of the calumniator.

What then, let me ask, are the sins for which the liberty of the press has been hunted down by a part of the aristocracy of France? Did it do more than expose to public scorn the filth of corruption; the obliquities of venality; and the charlatan tricks of hypocritical patriotism? If a political impostor arrogated to himself an exclusive claim of devotion to the present dynasty, it may have exhibited him as he once appeared in his capering career, with the bonnet rouge upon his head, and the accents of proscription on his tongue. If another boasted of the peculiar stability of his own principles during a long period of disastrous change, it may have exposed the alertness with which he trimmed on more occasions than one. If a nimble courtier may have let slip the taunting epithet of Bonapartist against a war-worn hero for raising his voice against tyranny, it may have reminded the accuser of the livery he once wore when he played spaniel in the anti-chambers of the emperor. Did an opulent minister, or a court favourite, harangue with desperate intemperance against liberty, and proclaim his belief in the divine right of princes, and the expediency of always having "la justice modifiée par les circonstances:" it may have reminded him of the obscurity of his own origin and the treacheries by which he filled his coffers, and placarded his body with ribbons and with stars. It may have done more than all this .- It may have enlightened the public mind, and rectified its judgment, and liberalized its temper, at a time when general intelligence and rectitude, and liberality do not suit the convenience of the great. These are its sins, and for these it hath died but with the certainty of a joyful resurrection; for liberty, as Lord Bacon said, is "a spark of fire that flieth up into the faces of those who seek to tread it out."

Various causes yet retard the establishment of a pure representative government in France, but all of them are wearing away under the friction of time and circumstance. The histo-

2.5 S. 10 THE

ries of old France are but little more than memoirs of the king or court; and hence their very language impedes the just conception. of a constitutional monarchy. The habit of considering the king as the vivifying principle of the state, as the fountain of every act and decision of the government, had become so inveterate in the nation, that it is hard for it to comprehend the transfer of power from his hands into those of a responsible minister. Men are often unconscious of the existence in themselves of prejudices infused into their minds in infancy, as well as of opinons imperceptibly contracted by the use of words. In this lies the difficulty of suddenly revolutionizing the habits and customs of a nation; for a government may be overturned, and the whole structure of society dissolved; but the old mode of thinking will still continue in the nation long after its causes have ceased to exist, and certain national vanities will prevail, till TIME, "the greatest of innovators," shall imperceptibly remove them.

It is impossible, too, for a very pleasing harmony to prevail in the action of a government, whose executive officers entertain sentiments hostile to its principles. Now in France almost all the civil offices are in the hands of ultra royalists who take pride in manifesting an antipathy to constitutional government, and who do not therefore make any efforts to bring the present system into credit. Even the peers who constitute the court of the king, have been seen to leave the royal presence in the palace of Thuileries, to go to that of the Luxembourg, to record their votes in opposition to any liberal measure the king had ventured to propose. In the departments, likewise, municipal officers are known to represent the innocent exercise by the people of the rights secured to them by the charter, as acts of insubordination on the part of disloyal Jacobins;* whilst others more cunningly mask their designs by extolling the merits of the charter, at the same time that they exert all their power to frustrate the fair execution of it. This indeed is acting up to the suggestion of Lord Bacon, that if men would cross a business they think others might handsomely and effectively execute, "let them pretend to wish it well, and move in it themselves in such sort as may soil it." It is from these causes that

* At Lyons and elsewhere.

there exists a singular discrepancy between the constitution and the government in France; for if by constitution we mean the funda. mental laws or usages by which a people consent to be governed, and by government the actual administration of public affairs by the particular incumbents in office; it may be observed, that the latter instead of making the former a constant rule of action, is very generally moved by schemes of expediency and views of private interest. Unhappily too, the charter stands alone, like a temple sprung up by magic amidst a chaos of ruins. The remains of the old regime are, to be sure, nearly mouldered away; but some of the accidental upstart edifices of the revolution yet remain, and many of the terrible towers of the imperial regime still spread a long and sorrowful shadow over the land. By this I would be understood to say, that although the charter of France be tolerably free, the government retains, in the details of administration, the short and cutting forms of despotism .--The ordinances and laws of the old government, of the frenzied tyrannies of the Revolution, and of the iron rule of Napoleon. are called up into practice as occasion suits, and they act on the present government like lees in wine; they are perpetually casting up a spissitude that clouds and corrupts the contexture of the whole body; nor can this ever appear completely clarified until separated from those impurities.

But notwithstanding all these impediments to the prompt establishment of freedom in France, the present government, with all its imperfections, is so superior to any thing she ever enjoyed before, and the march of general civilization in the departments is so firm and steady under its direction, that the most pleasing anticipations of future improvement may be indulged. Politics are now universally discussed, and an interest is *beginning* to be taken in the affairs of the government in every part of the kingdom, from the cottages of the provincial villages to the gilded saloons of the metropolis. "Sous ces rapports," says De Pradt, "le peuple Français commence a se rapprocher du peuple Anglois et Americain."

Many good men in France are averse from the attempt to establish a free government, on account of the ignorance and want of political virtue in the people. They do not reflect that children could never learn to walk if their feet were kept tied. The qualities they reproach their countrymen with wanting, can only be created by a system of education which it does not suit the interests of absolute government to establish. In the beauty of her climate, in the fertility of her soil, and in the vivacity of the natural genius of her people, France is superior to her northern neighbours. Why then should Madame De Stael blush to compare France with Britain and Germany, on the score of general instruction? "Quelques hommes distingués," says she, "cachent encore notre missire aux yeux de l'Europe; mais l'instruction du peuple est negligeé à un degré qui menace toute espece de gouvernement." This assertion must be confirmed by the observation of every honest traveller in France, although some have been disingenuous enough to ascribe to the revolution that ignorance, which has existed from "time to which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." It is stated by Compte Belaborde,* that there are supposed to be three millions of children in France between the ages of six and twelve years, of whom scarcely a fourth receive any education. On an estate near Bourges, which fell to a young gentleman last year, there were thirteen hundred persons, of whom only five knew how to write. A school of mutual instruction was immediately opened on it by the new proprietor; and such establishments are daily multiplying throughout the kingdom, in spite of the opposition of the ultras and the clergy, who prefer leaving education in the hands of les freres ignorantins, and who approve of the question of their great oracle, Louis XIV. to the Duc de Vivonne, "A auoi sert il lire?"

Three hundred Lancastrian schools, and fifteen societies were formed in France in two years after their introduction. The city of Paris alone contained fifty in the beginning of 1819, and the number in France at the end of that year of liberty, was near one thousand five hundred, all of which has been established in five years. That the march of instruction keeps pace with the progress of liberty in every country, and that its extent is determined by the extent and duration of liberty every where, are facts now too well ascertained by the actual condition of nations, to be denied. Education is more generally diffused in Scotland than in any country in Europe, '(not excepting England

• Page 468.

where tythes, poor rates, &c. have retarded its progress) and yet there are but three thousand six hundred schools in Scotland to a population of perhaps near three millions, whilst in the state of New-York, the greater part of which was a wilderness thirty years ago, there already exists six thousand schools in a population of less than one million and an half. Nor is the influence of liberty less powerful in the promotion of all kinds of internal improvements, than in the diffusion of the means of education. The condition of the state to which I have just alluded illustrates this. Look at the turnpike roads, the magnificent canals, the public houses, and flourishing farms, that adorn the whole extent of Country from the Hudson to Lake Erie, (a distance of three hundred miles, over which, about twenty years ago, the naked Indians were chasing the deer of the forest) and compare them, for example, with any thing of the kind that may exist in Calabria, or in the island of Sicily which was civilized some thousand years and in which, for the want of roads for wheel carriages, travellers are marched about in a sort of sedan chair on the backs of mules and asses. Yet Sicily is the most fertile region of Europe, has a delicious climate, and a population of three millions which have been enjoying for centuries the blessing of a legitimate government.*

The most serious cause of anxiety for the future fortunes of France is the recent restitution of the Jesuits, and the placing education in the hands of the clergy. The cross and the king's bust, without the charter, have now become the chief ornaments of the schools. M. Corbiere who is to supply the place of the director general of education, is a man of talents, but a leader of the high church and state party, and from him, therefore, no vigorous efforts to diffuse instruction can be expected.t

It is not only fashionable in England to consider morals, politeness, and good feeling, but even the system of education itself, as prodigiously deteriorated in France since the good old times when Goldsmith danced and fiddled on the banks of the Loire. It is contended that the French have made no advance in civilization and intelligence, and this belief is pretendedly

• A government which all the monarchs of Europe have since conspired to restore and perpetuate!

† He has since filled that office, and is now minister of the interiour, 1828.

bottomed on the assertions that no literary productions have issued from her press of equal celebrity with her elder classics. This assertion, even if true, would no more warrant the conclusion attempted to be drawn from it, than the declaration that the literature of England contained no finer productions than those of Shakespeare and Spencer would justify the inference that the general intellect of Britain had made no progress since the days All men of genius do not leave literary monuof Elizabeth. ments behind them. In the stormy season of revolution the rewards of fortune are showered on active, not speculative, talent; and therefore those minds which in the tranquillity of peace might have embellished a language with the more exquisite effusions of taste, expend during such periods their energies in the pursuit of political distinction or military glory. Napoleon used to say that Corneille was the only man of the age in which he 'Hved who had a clear conception of the art of government, and that for this reason, if that poet had lived under his reign, he would have made him prime minister. Now if the fiery genius of Corneille had been once entangled in the coils of politics, think you we should ever have been transported by the vehemence of Cinna, or charmed by the beauties of the Cid?

But has the talent of France, though powerfully drawn off to war and politics during the last thirty years, really shown itself unworthy of its ancient fame? The enemies of the revolution may be disposed to deny to that event the credit of the eloquent productions of Mirabeau, Mounier, Condorcet, Neckar, &c. because these men were educated and began to flourish under the old regime; but if this argument be admitted, it is presumed it would apply with equal force to exclude from the revolution the shame of producing such scoundrels as Robespierre, Marat, Barrère, Fouché, Every individual in France now old enough to exercise &c. even the elective franchise must have been born under the old regime, and every one whose faculties can have arrived at complete maturity must have been educated under it. The impulse of the revolution however on the national genius has actually equalled the expectations of every rationally sanguine mind. What public assembly, so small in numbers and so disadvantageously constituted for the admission and developement of talent, has ever displayed more vigour of intellect, than shown

forth in the discourses of the opposition in the French chamber of deputies in 1820? In what language have any works recently appeared more enchantingly eloquent, or more replete with the unction of fine feeling and liberal philosophy than those of Madame de Stael? Not to mention the descriptive elegance of Delille, may I not ask, what poem in the French language abounds in a greater variety of affluent imagery than the writings of Chateaubriand? What essayist in France since the days of Montaigne has written so entertainingly as Jouy, or produced any thing that promises to last longer than his Parisian or Provincial Hermits? Which of the French historians is equal to the adopted Sismondi or Botta? Which of their ancient politicians has written any thing on the nature of government with the force and distinctness of conception of Benjamin Constant? And in which of the productions of Pascal or Voltaire is surpassed, the vif and elegant piquancy of satire that sparkles in the political letters of Etienne?

It is admitted, I believe, on all hands, that Cuvier, La Place, La Lande, La Grange, Lavoirsier, Chaptal, Fourcroy, Berthollet, &c. have given to the reputation of France for science a lustre it never before possessed; and if in addition to the productions of the authors named above, those of Rulhieres, Moleville, Anquetil, Lacretelle, and Royau, of de Genlis, de Cottin, and de Souza, of Volney, Arnault, Ganilt, Say, Segur, Denon, and Le Brun, &c. have not given a commensurate splendour to her literature, they have at least maintained its respectability.*

* The literary productions of the French for the last thirty years, have been underrated by foreigners, because a richer harvest of talent has ripened during the same period in Great Britain and Germany. But in a fair balance, the literature of England might, perhaps, outweigh that of France; for although the French excel their rivals in all those lighter productions of taste and genius which embody the graces of conversation and shew an "oculum eruditum" in the arts of society. they fall short of them in solid monuments of genius. If a temple were erected to literature and science with a niche for each individual of the two nations who has been pre-eminent in a particular branch, would not that of the tragedy of the heart be allotted to Shakespeare, and that of epis poetry to Milton, whilst that of the tragedy of imagination might be given to Corneille or Racine, and that of comedy to Moliere? Would not Hume, Robertson, or Gibbon, fill that of real history, and Richardson, , or Scott, that of ficticious history? Would not Addison claim that of essay writing, and Yope that of translation, even while he contended with Boileau for that of satire, which might be awarded to Junius in

That the national taste for books is greatly increased of late years, may be inferred, I think, from the fact stated by Mr. Chaptal, that printing puts annually in circulation a value of upwards of twenty-one and a half millions of francs. Before the revolution periodical works and newspapers had but little circulation beyond the metropolis; but in 1819 about thirty-five thousand journals left Paris daily for the provinces, and the circulation of periodical works was also very considerable. The taste for newspapers is probably the best evidence of the interest a nation feels in the affairs of its government, and this taste in France may be almost said to have been created by the revolution. The fact that it exists in a much stronger degree in Great Britain and America. may prove the greater political civilization of those nations, but this does not justify the belief that France does not owe much to the revolution in this particular.

' An attentive consideration of the histories of civilized nations will shew, that the lapse of half a century is necessary after any great political revolution to bring its effects on the intellectual character of a people to maturity. Nor is it unworthy of remark, although it may have escaped the observation of philosophers, that those ages which are most celebrated for the flourishing of literary men, have usually succeeded by about fifty or sixty years to a scene of civil war or domestic trouble. The Peloponesian war preceded by about half a century the golden era of Grecian literature, and the civil contests of Marius and Scylla

preference to both of them? If Bossuet, Bourdaloue, or Massillon, obtained a preference for pulpit eloquence over Taylor, Blair, or Allison, the French could offer no competitor with Erskine, Mansfield, McIntosh, or Curran, for that of the bar; and except Mirabeau no rival of Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, or Grattan, in parliamentary eloquence. If Delille claimed with Thompson the niche of descriptive poetry, and Descartes with Bacon the merit of lifting the curtain from before the field of philosophical discovery, and Lavoirsier with Black for that of chemistry, who could the French propose as candidates against Locke and D. Stewart for that of Metaphysics and government, or against Adam Smith for that of political economy, or Dr. Johnson in criticism and morality, or Bolingbroke and Burke for polemic polities, or Byron that of the poetry of profound feeling? The French might be entitled to the niches of natural history, comparative anatomy; mineralogy, botsny, and the application of politics to history, for Buffon, Cuvier, Haiiy, Jussieus, and Montesquieu, but would not the English claim three of natural philosophy, anatomy, mechanical invention, and medicine, for Newton, Hervey, Watts, Arkwright, Cullen, and Willis?

•

were terminated but little more than the same lapse of time before the Augustan age.

Florence, after having been long distracted by the sanguinary factions of the Keys and the Eagle, (the Guelphs and the Ghibelines) succeeded before the close of the thirteenth century, in organizing her government on a free basis, and by this revolution not only tranquilized Tuscany, but laid the foundations of her wealth, her glory, and her happiness.* The league of the northern Italian states after the departure of the emperors; the institution of the Jubilee at Rome after the healing of the contest for the chair of St. Peter, with the civil broils of the Colonna and Ursini; and the removal of the papal see to Avignon, took place about the same time. Accordingly in less than half a century, Petrarch, Boccacio, and their associates, uncovered the embers of literature, and lighted the torch of modern poetry. To this we owe every thing. An asylum was thus prepared in Italy for the Muses, when "pressed in their flight by the arms of the Turks," and we may well tremble, as is said by Gibbon, at the thought, that the schools and libraries of Greece might have been overwhelmed before Europe had emerged from the deluge of barbarism; "and that the seeds of science might have been scattered by the winds before the Italian soil was prepared for their reception." But Florence acquired the beneficent government of Cosmo de Medicis; the last German emperor was crowned in the Vatican; the pontifical contests had finally ceased in Rome; and the harmony of the christian world was restored by the re-union of the Greeks and Latins under Eugenius IV. just before the seeds of learning were dispersed in the east by the fall of the Byzantine empire in 1453. Nor were those revolutionary changes unpropropitious in their consequences. The golden age of Lorenzo de Medicis in the former city, and of Leo in the latter, succeeded them after the lapse of half a century. It was then that Ariosto blew the horn of fiction and filled the air with enchanted castles; that Tasso fanned the sparks of inspiration with the breath of glory; and that Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Davila, lighted the lamps which they hung up in the temple of philosophy. It was then that Raphael, Corregio, and Titian, invested

* Machiavel's History of Florence.

.+ History of Decline and Fall, vol. xii. Lond. ed. p. 111.

canvass with the sublimity of inspiration, and that Michael Angelo lifted the pantheon into the air.

It was about sixty years after the end of the civil wars in France, (1596 to 1660) that the genius of the French nation blossomed into full bloom under Louis XIV. It was then that there appeared all of a sudden in this country a constellation of great men, such as Corneille, Moliere, Racine, Boileau, Pascal, Descartes, Arnauld, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fenelon, Boyle, Condé, Turenne, Vauban, Colbert, &c.

About sixty years also after the religious reformation, (1534 to 1600) there arese in England a galaxy of great men, such as Shakspeare, Spencer, and Sidney; Bacon, Hooker, Raliegh, and Coke; Ben. Johnson, Beaumont and Fletcher. Nearly the same period likewise intervened in the same country between the end of the Rebellion (1660—1710) and that efflorescence of talent in Pope, Addison, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, Marlborough, and Newton, which for a long time secured to the reign of Queen Anne the appellation of the Augustan Age of British Literature.

The war of 1735—40 in Germany between Frederick the Great, Augustus of Saxony, the Empress Maria Theresa, and the King of Bavaria bore in the activity and vehemence with which it was carried on, between nations of the same origin and language, a strong resemblance to a civil war. It is accordingly about sixty years afterwards, that Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Werner, Haller, Klopstock, Kotzebue, Kant, &c. came forward not only to rescue the German tongue from the imputation of barbarism, but to enrich it with chefs d'œuvres of genius.

The last example of this singular coincidence is Scotland.— About half a century after her union with England, or rather after the Rebellion of 1715, which two events considerably altered the habits of that country, she produced her first crop of talent in Hume, Robertson, Adam Smith, Read, Kaimes, Blair, Beattie, &c. Nor did a longer period elapse after the Rebellion of 1745, before Scotland assumed the first rank among nations for literature and science; before her Playfairs, Blacks, and Dugald Stewarts, began to unravel the thread of science; her Jeffries and M'Intoshes to display infinite powers of eloquence, satire, and philosophical criticism; her Scotts to sport like

6

magic with the wand of fictitious story; her Campbells to strike the lyre with Pindaric spirit; and her Burns to wake to rapture the chords of the Caledonian harp.

In pointing out this extraordinary conformity of dates and events, my object has been to suggest, that nature seems to require a certain interval of repose in a nation after a period of great excitement, before its intellectual capacities can be expected to ripen. The diversities of opinion which lead to civil war set men to thinking for themselves, and all the energies of a nation are called forth by revolution. The very liberty to think gives a new impulse to the human mind; new institutions therefore spring up, and among those educated under them some men of genius may be expected to appear. The daily enlargement of the circle of instruction which is now going on in the world, combined with the subdivision of profession and labour, may impair somewhat in its application to modern nations, the correctness of any general induction to be drawn from those historical facts; but still I cannot think it very presumptuous to predict, that a bright constellation of talent will probably arise both in France and America, (nay in Spain and Portugal if their revolutions succeed) during the latter half of the present century. The peculiar form of the American government which creates such a demand for political talents; the wide field which a new continent opens for professional men, and the great subdivision of property in the nation, may retard the production of poets and philosophers, until poetry and philosophy become the roads to fortune; but I have no doubt the new institutions of this republic will give a greater elevation to the range of public genius about the time I have suggested. In France, on the contrary, there is nothing likely to prevent or impede the accomplishment of this prediction, unless the government should be injudicious enough to attempt to continue such restraints on liberty, as may throw the nation a second time into confusion. I admit there is much seeming plausibility in the impression of Mr. Hume, that two golden ages are not to be expected in the same language, because the excellence of existing master pieces of composition is apt to damp the hopes of young genius, and excite an ambition for nevelty, which leads to corruption. But this observation, which was drawn from the experience of the

Greek and Latin tongues, does not seem likely to hold good in its application to modern nations; for among those the art of printing has erected tribunals of criticism which promise to correct the aberrations of taste. The many authors of distinguished merit who flourished after the middle of the last century in France, (Voltaire, Rousseau, Buffon, Montesquieu, Diderot, D'Alembert, Raynal, Duclos, Helvetius, Mably, Marmontel, &cc.) might alone inspire a doubt of the correctness of Mr. Hume's position; and I think the number of beautiful writers who appeared in England under George III. together with the present unrivalled condition of British literature might nearly justify the absolute rejection of it.

As the progress of the human mind depends essentially on the discoveries of science, and as nothing administers so abundantly to the enjoyments of life as a taste for literature, the influence of the American government on the arts and sciences is a matter of the deepest importance to mankind. Many very sensible men I know are disposed to consider human nature too imperfect for self-government, and do not therefore hesitate to predict, that the passions of the multitude will in a short time dissolve the present confederacy of states, erect several ferocious tyrannies in its stead, and turn the genius of our people from the arts which embellish or exalt existence, to those which destroy or degrade it. Perhaps no attentive observer of the follies which have characterized the spirit of faction in every age; or the wild propositions for change which occasionally break in on the serene wisdom that has hitherto distinguished our national legislature, can be entirely free from misgivings on this subject. It is perhaps equally natural to believe that which one extravagantly wishes, or extravagantly fears; and accordingly I have observed that those who are most fond of indulging that prophecy, are either the subjects of foreign states unwilling to allow the system of polity in their own countries to be less perfect than it should be; or irrascible American politicians who have been disappointed in their schemes of ambition at home. I have never, I confess, felt any apprehension of that change, or for the future prospérity of our union, except in one or two instances in which I have seen the people select for a place of confidence and trust, some individual who had neither the principles nor

the manners of a gentleman; who was a hypocrite in politics and an infidel in religion; who was a merciless tyrant over those whom accident or the law subjected to his power; and a fawning flatterer and hand-squeezer of those whose voices had invested him with the dignity he disgraced.

The very limited range of political experiments recorded in history, and the very superficial manner in which many men reason on them, and infer similar results from institutions which have no resemblance but in name, are the causes of the apprehensions which many entertain of our falling, at least into monarchy in America. I do not remember to have met with these fears in any man accustomed to contemplate at large the field of human affairs; to reason on it with discrimination, and to trace with judgment the real as well as the apparent causes of the grandeur and decay of nations. Such men recollect that the world has existed too short a time, and that there have been too few experiments in government, to justify a positive conclusion as to the durability of any particular form of civil polity. Knowledge and wealth are universally acknowledged to be the fountains of power and national greatness; hence I think the destiny of modern nations may be said to be entirely changed by three discoveries;---that of printing, which has enabled whole communities to become enlightened;-that of the mariner's compass, which has enlarged the dominions of commerce and enabled great bodies of individuals to enrich themselves;-and that of gunpowder, which (by destroying the utility of feudal castles, and by reducing the knight in armour, on his steed mailed in invulnerable accoutrements, to a level with the common soldier,) has enabled the peasantry of the old feudal nations to emancipate and to civilize themselves.

To assert that a constitution of government which is admitted to be sound in theory, cannot long exist in practice, because it happens to have been never tried, is unphilosophical, presumptuous and absurd. It might in the beginning have been affirmed with equal plausibility of every government on earth. None of those rash political conjecturers will pretend, I presume, to have more sagacity than Tacitus, and yet this judicious historian thought that a constitution, compounded of the three simple forms, though very beautiful in theory, "could never exist in fact; or if it should, could only be of short duration."* Yet such is actually the form of the British constitution; and what government has ever exhibited more stability and firmness than that of England? The American confederacy has now existed near half a century, and in spite of the centrifugal tendencies of a few factious states, the present government has succeeded beyond the expectations of its most sanguine admirers. It is not our interest, however, to convince the *legitimates* of its probable continuance. I once heard it said, by perhaps the most sensible prince in Europe, that the duration of "their system and the success of our experiment were things almost incompatible with each other," and nothing perhaps has prevented their secret resentment from breaking into open hostility against us, but the belief that in time we shall execute their wishes on ourselves.

The great ingenuity and high monarchical prejudices of Mr. Hume have never, I believe, been questioned; and it is therefore important to point out the origin of any errour in his reasoning on the science of government. He asserts that although all governments, free as well as absolute, have undergone a great change for the better in modern Europe, yet the monarchical seems to have made the highest advances towards perfection. Hence he boldly infers that there is a source of amelioration in monarchies, and of degeneracy in republics, which brings them ultimately on a level.† He admits, however, that although "our modern education and customs instil more humanity and moderation than the ancient, they have not as yet been able to overcome entirely the disadvantages of the monarchical form of government." The liberalizing effects of the moral habits and expanded intelligence of modern times had not been fairly experimented in any republic at the time Mr. Hume wrote, and the lights which subsequent events have thrown on this subject, shew how dangerous it is to draw universal principles from partial facts. The only republican constitution of government which has enjoyed those advantages at the time of its formation, and gone into operation with some preparation in the public mind to receive it, is that of America. Now surely no system of human polity, not even the ideal schemes of Plato and Cicero; no, nor

* L. iv. 33.

† Essay on Civil Liberty.

the utopian dreams of Harrington and Moore, ever presented in theory so beautiful a model of the machine of government, and none in operation has ever presented such a scene of uninterrupted harmony in the revolving of its various parts, as the republic of the United States. The source of improvement so far from being found wanting in the composition of that government, has actually overcome so many of the inconveniences of all government, that the only objection one hears alleged against that system, is that it is too perfect to last. Now, although appearances justify the belief that the American constitution has discovered and embalmed the vital principle of regeneration, I would ask whether, even after admitting its longevity to be doubtful, we should be more wise to reject the enjoyment of it, so long as we can preserve it, than the fool was who repudiated the wife he loved because she was not immortal? If the law of nature hath ordained that every thing on the face of the earth should carry in its breast the seed of decay, are we on that account to abstain from every enjoyment? If the question be yet unsettled whether a free press can prevent the degeneracy of a free government, are we to deem this uncertainty a sufficient reason for the prompt rejection of the experiment? At the time when the world is making such astonishing progress in agriculture, in commerce, and in manufactures, as well as in every branch of liberal science, is the temple of Janus to be kept perpetually open on account of the hostility of some men against every improvement in the art of government-or are the countries that happen to make discoveries in it to be loaded like Galileo with irons for knowing more than the Dominican and Franciscan friars?

It is well observed by Montesquieu that a despotism should have deserts for its frontiers. For the want of such, civilization is making inroads into every kingdom of Europe, and poisoning despotism every day. Constitutional principles are springing up in every direction, and however much their growth may be stinted by neglect or oppression, they are gaining strength every hour and will ultimately push their branches too high and too wide to be cut down by even the mercenary legions of despotism. Instead of attempting to cut down the tree of liberty, it would be wiser for the potentates of Europe to endeavour to train and direct it. But kings and courtiers are not wiser than other men; and if the bones of those who perished on the island of the Sirens could not, although they rose like white cliffs along the shores, deter others from venturing on the same coast, why should we imagine that political wrecks should be beacons of alarm to headstrong kings and obsequious courtiers?

I have often been led to wonder, I confess, how even those monarchs who disdain the inspirations of an enlarged benevolence, should be so blind as to reject the dictates of self-interest and common sense; for surely it is more glorious to be at the head of a great and powerful nation abounding in the prosperities of life, than the master of a few millions of half starved beggarly wretches and a few hundred vicious nobles. To what, but to the co-operation of the public in the government, does England owe the power of playing the first part in Europe for the last hundred years; from Blenheim to Waterloo if you please? Was she not the nation in Europe that was baptized first in the font of popular revolution, and was she not immediately regenerated by the ablution? Would the star of French ascendency have dated its meridian in 1688, but for that triumph of free principles in England which caused it from that moment to descend towards the horizon until it was again hurled aloft by the impulse of revolution? An equal ability to be great existed in England under the legitimate Stuarts as under Anne and her successors. Yet under the former her kings were the pensioned hirelings of France-her court a stage of debauchery-her master spirits, her Sidneys and her Russels, expiating the crime of public virtue on the scaffold; and her Churchhills and Godolphins begging a paltry bribe for their king from the French monarch! Look at this, and then compare the abject littleness of Great Britain at that time, with the large space she soon after filled in the eves of mankind when she had rejected the divine right of kings and established liberty-when her treasury under the management of the same Godolphin was pensioning half Europe, and when the same Churchhill, (become Marlborough) was shaking with the thunder of his artillery the very palace of Versailles.

Nor has the spirit of liberty ceased in England to extend the blessings of civilization, intelligence, and wealth at home, and to render her arms nearly irresistible abroad. Can any one believe that the internal improvements of that country would have ever advanced to their present state of extraordinary embellishment without it; or that if the influence of the popular branch of the British government over its foreign policy had been diminished, the army of Lord Wellington would have ever encamped within the walls of Paris? If any one can, he has a fund of credulity that is not likely to fail him on ordinary occasions.

By this admiration of the spirit created in Great Britain by the action of a free government, I would not be understood as approving in any degree the use which her ministry has recently made of the power which circumstances threw into their hands. The republican features of her constitution cannot always counteract the pernicious tendencies of the monarchical; and the ungenerous and unbecoming mannner in which her government has of late abandoned the guardianship of liberty on the continent and lent all its ability to advance the purposes of despotism, is an abuse of power which England will have, in due time, to deplore. Her ministry, it is true, have not ventured to make her more than an auxiliary member of the holy alliance, for the popular part of her government acts on the other parts like salt in the ocean in preventing putrefaction. The Borough representation in that country may have most of the defects attributed to it by its sensible opponents; but in whatever manner members gain their seats in parliament they are in a great degree controlled in their votes by public opinion, for they feel the absolute necessity on all great occasions of carrying it along with them. There is consequently a political vitality in England arising from the prescriptive right in the nation of thinking for itself and fed by the facility with which information is circulated through the country by means of gazettes, that renders it impossible for any government to run coun er for a long time to the vigorous pulsations of public opinion. Such an opposition would soon produce on that government the same paralyzing effect that the entrance of the spectres of divine right and absolute power produced, in Mr. Addison's dream, on the goddess of public credit, when they caused her bloom of beauty to disappear and the bags of gold that encompassed her throne to be of a sudden converted into bags of air.

The rebellion and the revolution of 1688 in England have produced on legislation an effect similar to that which was produced

in geography by the discoveries of Columbus. Nations are no longer disposed, neither in politics nor commerce, to navigate coastwise, but put boldly out to sea in pursuit of the ends they have in view. It is therefore a great mistake to suppose that the ancient system of Europe has been restored by the partition treaty of the Congress of Vienna. A new order of things essentially prevails. Questions of public moment no longer arise out of the conflicting interest of rival monarchs, but out of a contest almost every where existing between the governors and the governed. In ancient times it was the fashion to make war for conquests; in the middle ages for religion; in later times for commerce; and at present for the preservation of the right of the few to govern the many. This contest between antique prejudice and modern reason may be expected to last some time; for the present condition of Europe has been aptly likened, by a sensible politician, De Pradt, to its situation in the early ages of christianity. "Old Olympus defended his Gods to the last." It was more than three centuries before the thunders of Jupiter were silenced; before their echoes ceased to reverberate, except in their last retreats, the immortal anthems of Homer and Virgil. A political reformation has been actually working its way for the last century in Europe, and has much ameliorated the condition of even those nations whose institutions it has not changed. Its salutary operation in this particular resembles the effects of the religious reformation on the Catholic Church itself; and yet we are not to infer, because this church was enabled to maintain its ground in many countries, that arbitrary governments will be able to maintain theirs. It was the object, of the religious reformation only to correct the practices of the christian church, and not to subvert the principles of its faith. But the political reformation aims at convincing mankind of the possibility of governing themselves, and therefore saps the foundation of the feudal creed which rests on the belief that men must be governed.

I must confess, that it seems to me, that in proportion as civilization advances and spreads itself over the mass of nations, kings get out of use, like old fortifications. At first view, the lofty ivy-mantled battlements of an ancient castle, the massy sternness of its wrinkled walls, and the bold projections of its cloud-plumed towers, may seem less expugnable, than the sheek and grassy smoothness of a modern fortification. But all that array, which was a protection against the arrows and lances of a

array, which was a protection against the arrows and lances of a barbarous age, only serves to accelerate destruction under the play of artillery. It is the same with thrones,-when civilization advances far enough, and experiments in the art of government have been sufficiently tested to enable the batteries of reason to open fairly on them, all the apprehension with which they inspire the vulgar, will only serve to hasten their downfall. Even under the present imperfect developement of political civilization in Europe, it has been justly said, that "le temps des gouvernmens occultes est passé; celui des gouvernemens patents est arrivé." In fact, appearances justify the belief, that the British and American constitutions will make the tour of the world. Fifty years ago there was perhaps only one representative government in existence. Now, independent of those of Great Britain and her colonies; of the four and twenty confederate representative states of North America, and of the embryo republics of Chili, Buenos Ayres, Columbia, Brazil, Peru, and Mezico, there exists about a dozen representative constitutions on the old continent of Europe. These too have nearly all sprang up since the holy alliance took its seat, like the phantom of the night-mare, on the breast of the body corporate of Europe, and sounded the trumpet of alarm against the spirit of innovation. The mere establishment, however, of these representative governments has touched a chord of public feeling, which vibrates in every extremity of Europe. For, although the heavy despotisms of the north have succeeded in curbing for a time the spirit of regeneration in Italy; although they may rejoice to see the crescent of the Barbarian still floating in triumph on the fields of Marathon and Platzea, they might do well to remember, that even Prometheus did not long succeed in imposing on Jupiter a hide of straw for a real-ox.

Spain* and Portugal were, not many weeks since, the countries in Europe on which those, who felt an interest in the fortunes of the world, turned their eyes with the least complacency and expectation. They were plunged into an excess of

* The following paragraph was written on Spain alone, and a liberty is here taken of including Portugal in it, although the addition produces an anachronism.

humiliation and servitude, which left them no hope but in the "resolution of despair." Legitimate despotism there prevailed in all its native excellence and beauty. The grim form of Tyranny not only stretched himself out with voluptuous pleasure, over the dungeons of the Inquisition, but expanded himself over the whole land, and like Milton's Satan,

> "With head uplift above the wave and eyes That sparking blaz'd, his other parts bosides Prone on the flood, extended long and large, Lay floating many a rood." Book i. l. 195.

In those beautiful countries, before the late revolutions, industry did not second the gifts of nature. With a soil of unbounded fertility, they had a scant population dying of hunger; with a climate deliciously soft, producing the finest wool and silks, they were comparatively without manufactures; with territories environed by the sea, with coasts indented by fine harbours, and with the most extensive colonies in the world, they were without commerce and without seamen. They stood, in fact, mere ghosts of countries, without power as members of the European confederacy, and without respectability as bodies politic. Their natural advantages were much superiour to those of Great Britain, and yet how insignificant their relative rank in the scale of nations. To what cause then are we to attribute this extraordinary contrast, unless it be owing to an impression for a long time existing among those people, that their temporal felicity, and eternal beatitude depended on their maintaining absolute power in the hands of grand inquisitors, and superstitions monarchs.

Whether the suddenness of the late transition from slavery to liberty, and the omission to provide temporarily for two classes of men very powerful in those countries, the nobility and clergy, may not still interrupt for a time, the repose of those nations, it would be presumption in one of such little experience as myself to conjecture. In the natural course of events, these causes might be expected to produce much trouble; and if Spain and Portugal should escape all the calamities of intestine confusion, it will be an anomaly in the history of nations, to be attributed, perhaps, principally to their disgust of civil broils inspired by the recent occupation of those countries by the Frenck.

Italy has lost more than any part of Europe by the fall of Napoleon Art and nature combine to render that the loveliest and most attractive country on the face of the globe; and yet eighteen centuries of despotism have not, it seems, atoned for the evils she inflicted on the rest of the world, in the days of her prosperity. Accustomed as she had long been to consider every invader as a scourge, she abhorred the French during their first inroads, and bewailed the loss of her statues and pictures, (which with her buildings and her scenery were her living glories,) with more sensibility than the loss of her nominal independence. A little experience, however, allayed the fever of a resentment, which time converted into affection. The French ruled her with some severity, it is true, but they encouraged her industry, infused new life into her inanimate body, and taught her the truth of the suggestion of Addison, "that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth ruins more nations than the sword."* The Tuscans and northern Italians are so fine a race of people, that they want nothing but a tolerable government to become the most distinguished in Europe. They once entertained, with ardour, the hope of seeing Italy united under one government, and now deprecate the domination of the Germans far beyond that of the French. The despotism of the latter depended on the personal existence of an individual, and left of course the prospect of deliverance at his death; but the despotism of their feudal chiefs is a system, unaltered by the death of one prince, or the birth of another.

The Italians feel too that no revolution is so replete with mischief to the governed as that of a restoration. Formerly they had imposed by their social habitudes and the accidents of time certain limits on arbitrary government which in the absence of all political privileges served to protect their civil rights. But since the expulsion of the French, the old governments have not only in a great measure relapsed into their former tyrannical habits, but have in many instances endeavoured to incorporate with these, the machiavelian cunning of the imperial regime. They are chained too, head and foot, by Austria; the hinges of whose

* Spectator, vol. i.

government grate the harshest dissonance in their ears; for there is nothing more irreconcilable than the dull and plodding qualities of the Austrian with the bright and fervent capacities of the Italian. Even to the present day the Italians consider all the people beyond the Alps as *barbarians*, and the Ultramontaines in turn are somewhat revenged by turning the pretensions of the Italians to liberty into derision.*

If it was absolutely necessary for the allies to indemnify Austria for the surrender of her claim to Belgium by the delivery of any portion of classic territory into her rapacious hands, how much more generous and wise would it have been, both with an eye to the present content, and future tranquillity of Europe, to have run her boundary from the eastern extremity of Hungary on the Banube, to the head of the Gulph of Salonica. Turkey was not in a condition to resist it and surely her tyrannical oppression of the Greeks would have amply justified the rescuing of Greece from under her dominion. In this event Italy might have enjoyed once again the blessing of independence and under a federal representative government might have become in the balance of power, of heavy consequence in the southern scale which is destined to counterbalance the colossal weight of the

* Note. (1822) I cannot forbear making here one reflection on the cruel injustice and harshness with which the world in general has since condemned the poor Nespolitans for their untimely revolution and their impotent efforts to support it. Because a nation of people bred up under the most ignominious despotism did not, all of a sudden after the promulgation of a constitution, shew themselves capable of the sublimest virtues of freemen; because they did not imitate the Spartans at Thermonyle; or the Romans when the victorious Gaul entered their city, they have been hastily condemned as a pack of dastardly scoundrels who deserved their fate. The precipitate flight of twenty thousand Lazaroni, from before twice their numbers of disciplined soldiers, supported by the active co-operation, or passive connivance of all the powers of Europe, has been interpreted by withdrawing room politicians as a positive proof that the nation wished no change of government, and had been inveigled into an insurrectionary movement by a few designing Carbonari! In any thing but politics such an argument as this would be too shallow to gull even the most superficial blockhead; and yet many very sensible men have been convinced by it. Surely, however, there is nothing incomprehensible in the fact that every individual in a nation may be willing to get a free government without being willing to sacrifice every thing to obtain it; and for myself I owe it to truth to say that as far as my little opportunity of observation went, I did not observe among any people in Europe a more general and more ardent aspiration after liberty than among the intelligent men of Italy.

Russias 'in the north. Such an arrangement would have given greater compactness and energy to Austria herself, for the Greeks would have rejoiced at their deliverance from the Mahomedan yoke and have felt a hearty zeal in the cause of their new government; whereas the Italians dotest the Austrians and writhe under the control of a clumsy and awkward government which must ever move on the soil of Italy, harshly and heavily, like Pharaoh's chariot with the wheels off.

Austria contains about thirty millions of inhabitants, but is not entitled to the weight in the balance of power to which such a population would seemingly entitle her, for she is abhorred by her Polish subjects in the north, and by her Italian in the south. Besides, such is the march of general instruction and civilization in Europe, that no nation which moves slowly in these particulars can maintain its relative rank. Now, unhappily for the future destinies of Austria, not only does the heaviness of her national character impede the progress of improvement, but the mildness of her present despotism (at home) both in church and state promises to continue for some time the existing checks on The Austrian government bears, in its hostility civilization. to innovation a greater resemblance than any other in Europe to that of China, but it is at the same time far less favourably situated than this for the permanence of its institutions. With the exception of her eastern frontier, Austria is encircled by a string of states to which political and religious toleration has given a projectile impulse in the course of civilization that must in some degree communicate itself to her. It appears to me therefore that unless she should accidentally fall into the hands' of a prince of extraordinary genius and liberality, who may rouse her from her present stupid inertness, the destiny that inevitably awaits her is that of dismemberment or violent revolution. She must awake herself from her sleep of despotism; or else she will fall a sacrifice to the ambition of her neighbours and the necessities of the times; or be by the genius of liberty too suddenly awakened for her own prosperity.*

The late declarations of the emperor of Austria at Layback against learning and unnovations shew the correctness of at least a part of the view taken above of his policy. About two years since, the author happened to be at Rome when that monarch with a suite of six and thirty coaches and six entered the "eternal city."

The present kingdom of Prussia contains about twelve millions of souls, and as it has been carved out by the diplomatic surgeons of the allies, resembles the wings of a great edifice without any corresponding centre. Her eastern extremity stretches to the Niemen, and her western over the Rhine, so that she is too unconsolidated to act in any future war, either as a spear to assail, or as a shield to protect the southern nations of Europe. If peace and security had been the real objects of the Congress of Vienna, would they have not rounded the Prussian territory into a compact form, so as to have enabled its government to hold with Austria the balance of power between the north and the south? Would they have so elongated it into the territories of her neighbours as to make her limbs a mere bon bouche for each of them? For who can doubt that the first aggression of Russia on Christian Europe will be the seizure of Prussian Poland; that Austria, with Saxony, hungers after the dismembered part at least of the latter, and that France almost looks on the Rhinish provinces as her own? Unhappily too for the future greatness and repose of the Prussian monarchy, her contiguity with the three chief powers of Europe may not only prevent a cordial friendship or alliance with either of them, but check the inhabitants in believing that their condition is permanently settled. If the present king of Prussia were a great statesman, he might undoubtedly remedy the precariousness of his situation by placing himself at the head of the confederated states of Germany, whose population altogether amounts to about thirty millions. A glorious opportunity of accomplishing this has been open to him for the last seven years, and yet he has not had wisdom enough to embrace it. Since the overthrow of Napoleon, Bavaria, Baden, Wirtemberg, Hesse, and nearly all the smaller German states, have acquired the representative form of government,

And the indignant feelings excited in seeing "a barbario emperor climb the high sapitol," and which were heightened by the view of the hundred thousand ragged wretches that narrowed up the passage of the Flaminian way and the Corso, even to the very Forum, he could not help reflecting how much more wisely might have been employed (than in fètes, &c. for the emperor's entertainment) the million of crowns which the government borrowed on the occasion, if they had been applied to relieve and to lift up the inhabitants of that sad country from the abyss of degradation into which they have been plunged by near two thousand years of despotism. and the extreme jealousy and displeasure with which Austria has regarded every change, makes it a very desirable object to those states to have a great protector in their immediate vicinity. When the king of Prussia invited his subjects to rise and expel the French, he promised them a constitution in the event of success; and had he fulfilled his engagement with the fidelity they did theirs, he would have placed himself, by that act alone, at the head of the representative states of the confederacy, and have been able to wield in any future war the efficient force of forty millions of people. But alas! he prefers the imputation of broken faith, and the puerile pleasure of waging war against professors and students, to the glory of being the defender of the liberties of Germany. By this shallow policy he has rendered his government so unpopular, that he is obliged to maintain a military force disproportioned to his means, and feels already a diminution of the influence he once enjoyed among the "Holy Allies." He entertains himself with the vain imagination, that intelligence is not too generally spread over Prussia to be rooted out; and deceives himself with the hope of perpetuating an absolute military government. The liberal spirit however infused into that country by the great Frederick, is now working its way through the body politic silently, like the apparently inert moisture "which is concealed in the fissures of a rock, and which, by the expansive force of congelation, will be enabled to rend asunder its mass and heave it from its basis."*

The mind of Frederick the Great itself was better suited to the present than to the future. It embraced with ardour, and executed with celerity, every project calculated to aggrandize immediately his kingdom, or embellish his reign. But he was rather disposed to laugh at than to love or to pity mankind; and as brilliant theories in politics did not attract very vehemently his imagination, he was in some degree the enemy of all political innovation that did not tend directly to consolidate his own power. Enlightened as the north of Germany then was by the consequences of the reformation, and emboldened as it was in spirit by the enterprizes of his superb genius, it was peculiarly fitted to receive a constitutional form of government. But instead of unharnessing her from the bondage of feudal tyranny,

* D. Stewart.

and giving her a national assembly to renovate her exhausted energies and to invigorate her public pulse by the throbs of enlightened patriotism, he preferred knotting and combining his heterogeneous provinces together by that creed of despotism which subjects the prosperity of nations to the personal characters of kings.

The absolute government of Denmark must render her, while it lasts, but little more than a dead weight in the political scale of Europe; and the insular situation of Sweden withdraws her in a great degree from any active interference in the affairs of the The great empire of Russia, therefore, hangs like a tresouth. mendous avalanche over civilized Europe; and as the impediments which might have arrested its descent between the Vistula and the Rhine, have been levelled down or so broken into disjointed masses, as to be almost incapable of offering any resistance to it, there is little prospect (without a change) of its being checked before it reaches the kingdom of France, if even this should be a barrier against it. The spirit which animates a part of Germany to be sure is good, and if the elements of that vast empire were pronerly combined under a free government, there would be every thing to hope from her capacity. But cut up as she is into such a variety of states, how small is her chance of escaping (in time to resist a torrent of invaders) from the jarrings and jealousies of a factious spirit! Broken too, alas! as she is into orders and casts, and independent little monarchies, how small is the probability of her forming a federal representative government, in time to break the storm that is gathering against her in the north? If Prussia and Denmark were free, and united with the Germanic confederation and the Pays Bas in a defensive league, and if this union were backed by France, Spain, and Britain, Europe would have nothing to apprehend from the northern hive. But time only can determine whether the existing governments of those nations, instead of accelerating the march of civilization and erecting barriers against the ever-toiling wave of the northern multitude, may not prefer exhausting their energies in futile efforts to embalm at home the relics of barbarism.

France herself is at this moment in that unpleasant situation, where, in the eyes of the court, love of liberty passes for Jacobinism, and a zeal for the charter is interpreted into a fondness

⁸ 

for revolution. Her ultra-royalists are clamorous for the restoration of the crown to its ancient prerogatives, and of the noblesse to its ancient right of domination; the ministerialists (1820) seek to preserve a monopoly of office in their own hands, and wish to carry the regal prerogative very high, but dread the absolute ascendancy of the clergy and nobles; whilst the Liberals desire the establishment of a limited monarchy, with its dissimilar elements so well poised in the balance of union, as to prevent the dangerous preponderance of any one of them. The two former parties naturally regard the third with extreme antipathy; and as it is known to be the actual representative of the national sentiment, it is looked on with peculiar jealousy, and enjoys as little favour at court as the genuine whig party in England did under the second Stuarts. Among the most fervent of this party is the old Marquis de la Fayette, who has now pursued, for near fifty years, with undeviating rectitude, the path of benevolence and honour. What Mr. Fox said of him some thirty years ago, continues true to this hour; for he still does honour to liberty, and renders it dear by the virtues with which he displays it environed; by the nobleness of his principles; "the unalterable purity of his actions; the wisdom and firmness of his mind, and by the sweetness, disinterestedness, and the generosity of his soul." The singular viscissitudes of his fortunes; the bitter abhorrence with which he has ever been regarded by all who regret any advancement of the general happiness of the world; and the peculiar felicity, and exemption from blame, with which it has pleased heaven to connect him with the revolutions of the two hemispheres, and to promise him a long enjoyment of life to behold the fruits of his labours, will hereafter render his merity more conspicuous, and his memory more vencrable. To no individual, perhaps, did it ever happen to be equally odious at the same time to legitimate despots and ferocious Jacobins; for when the latter chased him out of his country, and razed his house to the ground, because he had no appetite for human blood, the former, because he had a love for rational liberty, immured him in the dungeons of Olmutz.-When restored to his country, he disdained the temptations held out to him by Napoleon to soil the beauty of his reputation; and his gallant sons were consequently denied all advancement

in the army. On the return of the Bourbons, he emerged from his solitude and appeared at court; but having met with a cold reception from the brother of the king, he again retired from a scene in which his presence could avail nothing to his country. When the hopes of the friends of liberty were blasted by the Congress of Vienna and the policy of the Bourbons; and when Napoleon succeeded in throwing himself a second time upon the throne, General La Fayette became a member of the legislature, and was there distinguished as usual for the independent manliness of his conduct. Since the second restoration, he has succeeded, against the will of the court, in obtaining a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, and continues, with becoming modesty and firmness, to vindicate the spirit of liberty, and to distinguish it from its counterfeit, the spirit of faction. The party with which he is connected, contains much the greater part of the thinking and enlightened men of the kingdom; but scattered as they are over the whole face of the country, and sometimes separated from each other by a considerable distance, they have not as yet been able to harmonize their views into perfect concert. But they act more and more in unison every day; their attachment to liberty consolidates the foundations of their greatness, so that in spite of the efforts of government to keep them down, they must triumph in the end. The testamentary law, which compels the division of estates, is one of their most powerful auxiliaries; and will (except so far as its action is eluded by the majorats of the peers) break down the whole aristocracy of the kingdom.

I know there is generally imagined to prevail in France a lightness and frivolity of character, incompatible with the stable virtues necessary for a free government. But I am inclined to believe that those who entertain this judgment, are men who have not paid much attention to the influence of moral causes or government, in forming the habits of a people. "Aucun peuple ne seroit que ce que la nature de son government le feroit etre."* A great change has been already produced in France by her representative government, imperfect as it is. An air of reflection is now perceived, by every observer, to be mingled with the brilliant gayety which characterizes the nation. The boldness with which every political topic has been discussed of late years, and

* Rousseau, vol. xxv.

the ability with which many important questions have been debated in the chamber of deputies, have created a taste for the moral sciences, and made some acquaintance with them requisite for all who mix in society. Besides, the speeches of the Deputies are, notwithstanding the ²censorship, printed in the newspapers, and numerous political opinions are thus disseminated over the country, and do give an impulse, formerly unknown, to the public mind in France. Foreigners are apt to judge of the whole French nation from the idlers of Paris, and it cannot be denied, that the Parisians are as the Hermit of the Chaussée d'Antin observes, a people more active than occupied, more curious than instructed, more solicitous to see than to understand, and more anxious to judge than to reflect.

That the vivacious hurry of existence which characterizes the French metropolis, and the round of enchantments that abound in it, should keep the minds of many individuals so perpetually whipped up by novelties, as to make them incapable of the steady phlegm of the people of London, is no reason why the nation should be considered unfit for a gradual enlargement of its privileges. I should apprehend much, to be sure, from placing the reigns of government in the hands of men whose minds were either deprayed or derationalized by old fashioned coteries, in which every sentiment, springing from reason and sensibility, is laughed at as antideluvian. Bonaparte is said to have observed, that he could conquer every thing he could touch, except the saloons of Paris; and it was no doubt with a view of getting fashion on his side, that he so eagerly embraced the onportunity of employing the ancient noblesse. Such is the influence of fashion, in fact, in Paris, that one of the most accomplished men I have seen in France, (a man in whom age has settled the desultory fancies of youth, and foreign travel somewhat abated the vivacity of early prejudice,) is so completely under its dominion, that he cannot converse ten minutes on a serious subject, without expressing contradictory ideas; for he never once questions the correctness of a fashionable notion, and has otherwise a clear perception of truth. But the silent insinu. ating agency of a representative government is achieving against the saloons, what the whole weight of Bonaparte's despotism could not accomplish. After giving due consideration,

then, to all the impediments to the establishment of a free government in France, I think I may venture, without the hazard of your thinking me presumptuous, to assert, that it will be ultimately accomplished. Indeed, after looking at the dispositions of the French nation, as I have done, to the best of my ability in every shape and posture, in the course of those former letters, which were devoted to tracing the causes and consequences of the revolution; after comparing every fact and appearance, I not only think the above conclusion established by very solid induction, but that France has a chance of obtaining in some few years, a better government than has hitherto existed in Europe. The English have vastly the advantage of the French in the habits of liberty and in the freedom of their municipal regulations; but then the French are in turn exempt from some of the prejudices against the popular principle in government, which time and circumstance have created in England, as well as from some of the burthens and inconveniences created there by accident or error, and continued from necessitv.

Great Britain owes, even in the opinion of Mr. Hume,* to the division of property occasioned by the reformation, and to the "prevalence of democratical principles under the commonwealth," that activity and vigour of national character, by which she has been so pre-eminently distinguished; and as we know that the different phenomena exhibited by human societies have arisen entirely from the different circumstances in which they were placed, we may safely infer the improvement of France from the same causes which produced the prosperity of England. I am aware there is nothing so adventurous as political prophe-cies, both because many adventitious and unforeseen events may arise to prevent their fulfilment, and because, such is the proneness of mankind to ridicule them, that even philosophers themselves are not always exempt from the contagion. Some evidence of this is afforded, I think, by Dugald Stewart, t when he quotes as a very striking and instructive observation, the following criticism of David Hume, t on a prophecy in the Oceana. "Harrington thought himself so sure of his general principle, that the balance of power depended on property, that

* Hist. of England, chap. lxii. † First Dissertation, 114. ‡ Essay vii.

•

he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish menarchy in England; but his book was scarcely published, when the king was restored; and we see that monarchy has ever since subsisted on the same footing as before." Now, surely a part of this prophecy of Harrington was virtually, though not literally fulfilled; for although absolute monarchy was restored, it could not subsist, and the revolution of 1688 came to overset it. The revolution did not, it is true, abolish monarchy, but it continued this form of government under restrictions and limitations, with which it had never before existed in any age or country of the world. So far, indeed, from establishing it "on the same footing as before," as is broadly asserted by Mr. Hume, it might not perhaps be difficult to prove that there was more of the true republican principle in the new monarchy, than existed in the commonwealth at the time at which Harrington wrote.

The final success of the French in the establishment of a free constitution, will surely be a subject of rejoicing to every heart that has philanthropy enough to sympathize in the misfortunes of so brave, so brilliant, and so accomplished a people. It may be justly said, that one cannot step in Greece, without treading on a glory, nor in Rome without stumbling over a noble recollection; but, alas, how different are the visions which arise in the mind of one who contemplates the public squares of Paris; visions which made the virtuous Servan of Grenoble, exclaim with a sigh, "Et moi aussi, je suis homme." Yet the soil, which is fertilized by the Seine, is like that which is washed by the Tiber or the Illissus; and the soft sunshine, which sheds a hue of enchantment over Montmartre, is at least as favourable to the perfection of the human character, as the brighter heaven which beams on the Palatine, or the more voluptuous sky that glows over the Acropolis. Writince abounds too in examples of the noblest private virtue, and wants nothing but a free government to render her renown commensurate with her greatness? The brisk and vigorous advances she made on the road to liberty in 1818-19, and the sudden recoil of her government in 1820, have led many, and even some of the foreign embassies to imagine, that the French nation was actually retrograding from the goal of freedom. But there is no errour so prolific, as that of reasoning from accidental appearances to general conclusions,

and no supposition so absurd, as that which assumes that the **steps** of a nation in its progress to liberty must be in regular sequence. On the contrary, they resemble rather the labouring of the sea, when the tide is rising; one heavy wave rolls high upon the beach, and in striving to climb its banks, "is washed off like those which preceded it, and the waters may then look as if they were retiring;"* but whilst these billows are beating on the shore, the volume of the deep is silently swelling, and gaining strength for a heavier surge, which moves forward in its turn, and gains more by the new invasion than had been lost by the retreat of its predecessor, until at last some one rolls successfully over the barrier, and swells in triumph beyond it.

When the tumult of the rebellion was over, the English nation recoiled from what they had done, and to the back their ancient government again, and such was the excess of rejoicing, which many felt, and many feigned on that occasion, that Lord Bolingbroke was led to suppose from the general adulation of arbitrary government which followed, that the liberties of England would have been lost for ever, if it had not been for such great and good men as Clarendon and Southampton. But this was a hasty and presumptuous judgment; for the success of the rebellion had sown the seeds of liberty deep in England, and though they did not come up with the first sunshine, they were sure to come up at last, and with a vigour too, which was not to be blasted by the frosts of divine right and passive obedience. Such politicians, therefore, as are anxious to augur ill from the present state of France, would do well to consider, whether the same seed are not universally planted there; and such as are naturally prone to despondency, may find encouragement in the forcible reflection of Mr. Fox, that within a short time from those dismal days, in which men of the greatest constancy despaired, and had reason to do so; "within five years after the death of Sidney, arose the brightest era of freedom known in the annals of England."

That the permanent restoration of absolute monarchy in France is impracticable must appear evident, I think, from the facts cited in the course of the letters I have written to you; but still you may think it very hardy in me to suggest that the probable cuthanasia of the French charter is a republican constitution.—

* Taylor.

Ber notwithstanding the perishable tendencies of the charter, you may probably think that the monarchical habits of the French nation-the facility of borrowing now enjoyed by the governmentthe mercenary spirit of a standing army of 240,000 men-and the terrific attitude recently assumed by the Holy Alliance, are very powerful guardians of the present state of things. And so they are. But the progress of the human mind is irresistible, and the consequences of a high state of political civilization inevitable. I cannot help thinking, however, that if the Bourbons were satisfied with governing France for her prosperity and glory, with the limitations necessary for the security of persons and property; that if they could rid themselves of that feverish propensity to heighten and enlarge prerogative, which is the malady of kings, they might reign long and happily over the French people. For a government in which the king is merely a nominal being, with power to appoint the minister designated by public opinion; a government in which the chief magistrate is hereditary, but capable of exercising power only in proportion as he is good, and in which the minister is the real king; bears so strong a resemblance to a republic, that the people would not be willing for a long time to expose themselves to the hazard of revolution to change it. The calamities suffered by France in consequence of her late experiment too, will, for some time, very powerfully impress on her mind the wisdom of remembering, that there is no point in human concerns, "wherein the dictates of virtue and worldly prudence are so identified as in the great question of resistance by force to established government."* The success of the English likewise, under a limited monarchy, will long have a prevailing influence over the neighbours; for fully impressed as I am of the superiority of the form of our American government over that of England, I am rejoiced to admit, that no system of human polity has ever secured for the same length of time, so much prosperity to a community as that after which we fashioned our own. With whatever indignation, therefore, as an American, I might be disposed to regard the conduct of Great Britain towards my own country, when I remember that her hostility has been marked by every outrage and contumely that jealousy and the affectation of contempt could * History of James IL.

inspire, I confess, that as an inhabitant of the world, I am disposed to forgive and to forget it. When I look at the eminence she has attained in the arts and sciences; on her progress in general civilization, and on the dignity of the human character within her realm;-when in addition to all this I reflect on the small portion of the globe that enjoys the blessings of civilization, and how much this small portion owes to the discoveries and researches of Great Britain, I confess, that far from being disposed to rail at the defects of her institutions, I am penetrated by a deep feeling of regret for the gloom that hangs over her eventful future. Not that I believe her actual prosperity likely to be diminished; for happen what may, her people are too wise to submit to absolute government; but only that there is mixed up with her immense materials of greatness, some seeds of confusion which may subject her to temporary troubles. There is every reason to believe, however, that in all civilized nations the genius of our species is still progressing, and that even those inconveniences with which time and circumstance may have encumbered adult governments, will gradually disappear as the principles of legislation become more studied and better understood.

I remember to have heard General De La Fayette once observe, that America was the most civilized country on earth, and assign as a proof of the correctness of that opinion, the existence in the United States of almost universal suffrage with the most rational of all governments. If this remark had proceeded from a native American it might have been considered vain-glorious-but is it not nevertheless true; for what government in Europe could intrust such powers in the hands of its subjects? Ten millions of people too, who, like those of the United States, know no sovereign but the law; who require the presence of no troops to preserve order even in their most numerous public meetings: who suffer foreigners to travel freely through their country without passports; who universally enjoy the privilege of possessing arms, and the liberty of locomotion at pleasure; who require no restraints on the liberty of the press, except the sage control of public opinion; who live perfectly secure and perfectly protected, and yet among whom, over the whole extent of their territory, the government is invisible, and never

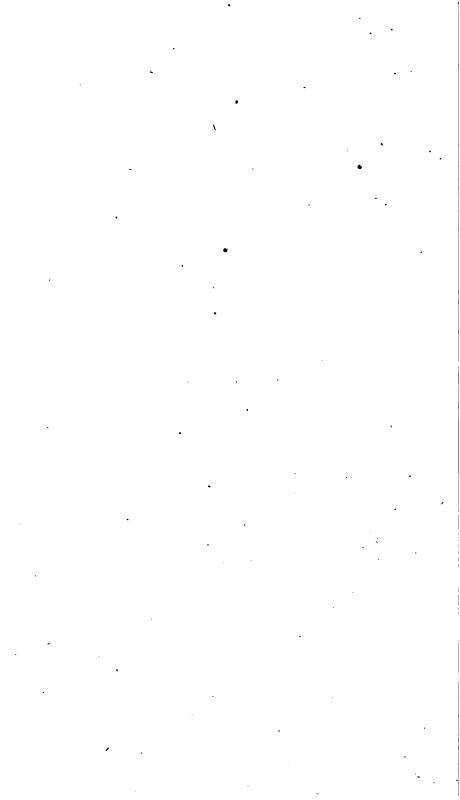
9

interferes in the private concerns of an individual, unless he violates the law: such a people, I say, must be admitted, even by those who are least disposed to praise them, to be possessed of an extraordinary portion of common sense. Equally remote from the simple ignorance of savage life and the voluptuous refinements of excessive wealth, the people of America have been hitherto too much occupied in the practical concerns of life for those who are gifted with talent among them to find leisure to

hitherto too much occupied in the practical concerns of life for those who are gifted with talent among them to find leisure to devote themselves so exclusively to literature and science, as to throw out the lights necessary to give foreigners a just idea of the general condition of the nation. The extremes of intellectual cultivation and ignorance are rare in the United States, but the average of mental improvement is higher than in any other country; and one of the reasons why little encouragement is there given to native productions is, that the literary labours of other nations, and especially that pre-eminent nation whose language is there spoken, are open to the public. The best works of British authors are procured without the expense of purchasing a copy-right, and are so rapidly re-printed and scattered by the American press, that in a few weeks after they appear in London, they administer to the intellectual enjoyment of those who inhabit the banks of the Potowmac, the Ohio and the Missouri. The greediness with which those works too are devoured, leaves no doubt of the existence of a taste for literature; and those who have studied the influence of free political institutions on the human mind, feel justified in indulging the most sanguine anticipations of its increase and happy influence on the national character.

If the observation of Voltaire, that "the French have only thought by halves, but that the English, because their wings have never been clipt, have flown to heaven and become the preceptors of the world," be correct, what may we not hope from the mind of the whole continent of America, unfettered as it is? It was from the best of pre-existing governments, that of England, that we borrowed the model of ours; and the fortunate circumstances in which we were placed, enabled us to select the beauties and reject the defects and blemishes which the accidental formation of the original had admitted into it. In this manner we erected a temple of liberty, with a symmetry of form and proportion which had been previously conceived to belong only to the creations of the imagination. If we rejected the gilded dome of the original, which, according to the rules of our taste, oppressed the edifice, it was only to embellish the porticos that surrounded it; and if we stripped the columns of these of their Corinthian capitals, it was only to supply their places by the Ionic volute, a more beautiful and a chaster order. Happy then in the enjoyment of what we are wont to consider the perfection of social institutions, let us not seek to excite the envy, but the emulation of other nations; let us rejoice in the peculiar advantages of our own situation, and leave to others the quiet possession of their own governments, and the privilege of contemplating them with equal complacency and satisfaction.

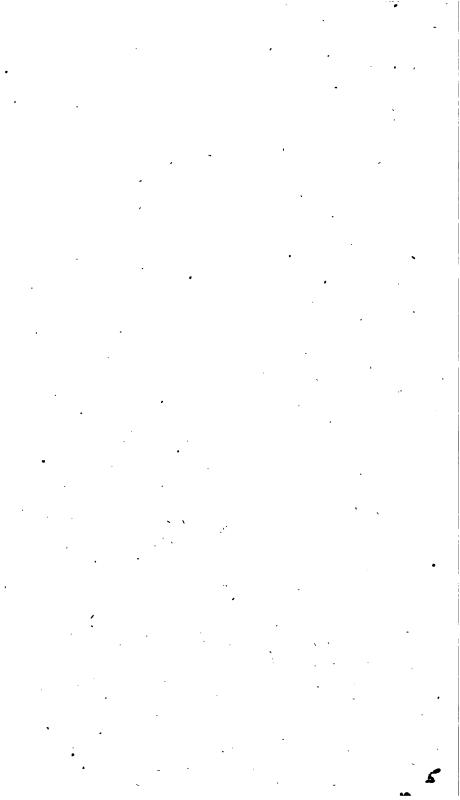
I have endeavoured in this supplementary letter to throw together such loose thoughts and general political impressions as occurred to me, after finishing the letters you persuaded me to write; and I would fain hope, that however paradoxical some of these ideas may appear to you if taken separately, they will all stand justified when regarded in connexion with those particular details from which they are mere corollaries. It is not improbable that at some future time, in retrospecting to the many delightful scenes I have enjoyed in this country, I may be led to doubt the justness of the faults I have found with it, and be disposed to fancy, that a system of polity which gives so much happiness and splendour to a nation, deserves to be perpetuated in all its parts. Certainly where there is so much to admire, blame should be awarded with extreme caution. The faults. however, which I have ventured to find, have not grown out of any disposition to carp and cavil at existing establishments, but out of a deep impression of the glorious scene of prosperity that would open on France, if her present amiable manners and social habitudes could be combined with the advantages which result from the possession of free political institutions.

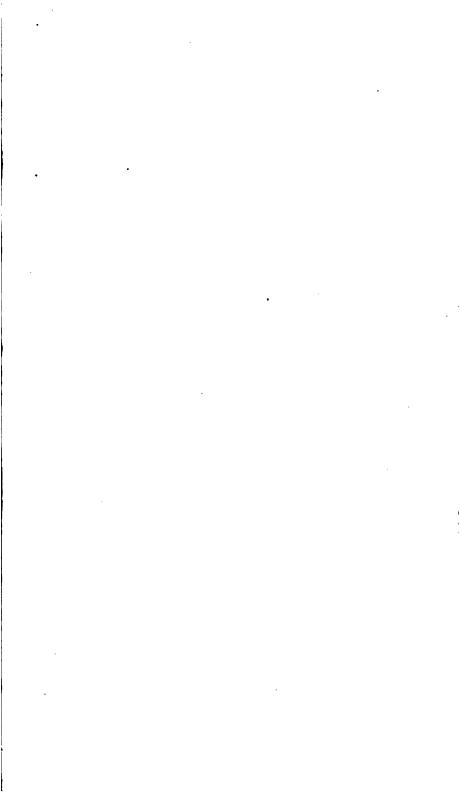


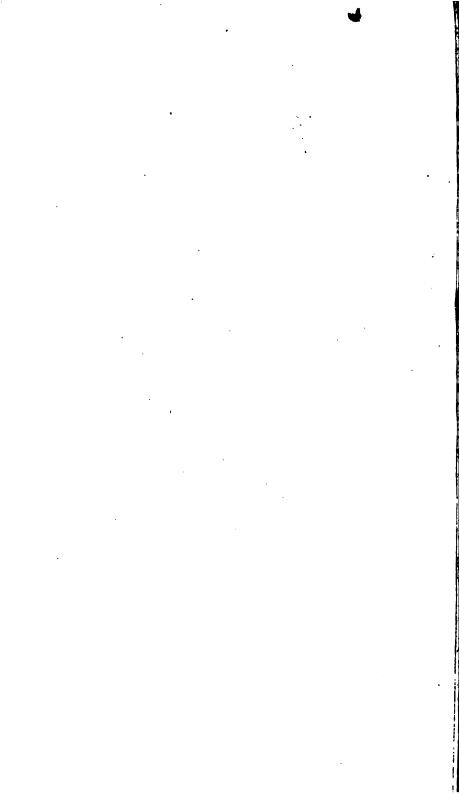
## ERRATA.

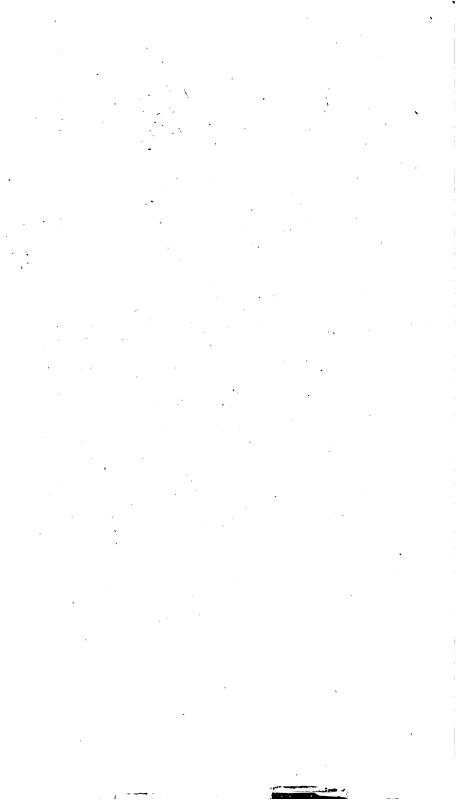
The reader is requested to make the following corrections, which, with several others of little importance, have arisen from the MS. being chafed or worn, and from the want of the necessary corrections of the author.

Page	23	line las	t, insert and after kin	<i>D</i> 7.	
	26	8	so before the		
	36	17	ago after ye		
	64	14	strike out the word		
	71	28	insert ceux before		
	102	25	driven after		
•		17		utor to Orleans and	only minister in
				ty of Louis XV.	
	104	<b>S</b> 8	that of after i	than.	•
	143	14	to after not.		
	183	3	the loss of after	er a <i>painst</i> .	
	211	25	strike out so.		
1	233	18	insert to after and.		
`	263	14	que after et.		
	357	1	strike out only.	•	
•	368	16	insert wheat after	crop.	1
	6	24	for s'informe, read		•
	12	6	mareshals,	marechaux.	
	23	14	illiminate,	eliminate.	
	35	9	misore,	misère.	<b>v</b>
	<b>S</b> 6	16	four,	three	•
	55	17	Rhinish,	Rhenish.	
	59	34	government,	gouvernement.	
	75	last	Hopital,	L'Hospital.	,
	77	5 1	note St. Bartholemy,	St. Bartholomew.	
		6	judges,	juges.	
	88	/ 14	mortie,	moitié,	
•	97	30	This,	The.	
	102	9	courts,	court.	
	107	19	libre	libres.	
	113	26	bustles,	bu <b>stle.</b>	
	119	<b>33 &amp; 3</b>		Neoker.	
	122	2	grevances, fine,	grievances.	
•	131	26	fine,	sine.	
	123	17	Pincini,	Piccini.	
	154	13	satisfatione,	satisfazione.	
	155	9	ampitheatre	amphitheatres	
	163	4	commanded	should command.	i
	191	8	habses	habeas.	
	909	7	levie,	levée.	
	210	27	would	could.	
	233	1	Bacon,	Shakespeare.	
	242	7	conditions,	condition.	
	244	33	worshipper,	worshippers.	· •
	249	1 &		Quatre.	
	254	last	Nanterre,	Ruel.	
	262	10 1	its head,	their head.	
	301	-	vivait,	vivaient.	•
	307 910	13 25	piqures,	piqueurs,	
	312 319	¥0 20	foundation,	fountain. diminution.	
	319	20 37	dimunition	ne saurait être.	
	332 346	3/ 8	ne peut être,	could.	
	354	23	would, Cabriole	Cariole.	
	004	20	Cabriole,	JALINIC.	









## THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

## This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

 		-	
 	 		-
	 	_	

